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Old-fashioned societies strike back

Interest rate cut in home loans battle

By Robert Miller

THE Nationwide Building Society yesterday cut its mortgage rate for a million borrowers in a surprise move to boost the housing market and strike a blow for old-fashioned mutual societies as its rivals race to become banks.

The half-point cut in the home loan rate and a corresponding increase in the interest it pays its five million savers will cost the society about half of its £400 million annual profits.

The money is being invested in customer loyalty in the face of the recent merger mania that has brought £1,000 hand-outs to members of societies that have combined or announced plans to become publicly quoted companies.

The Nationwide wants to persuade its members that by sticking with its mutual status it can use its profits to offer benefits that cannot be

matched by rivals who have to account to shareholders.

Both the Halifax and the Woolwich intend to convert next year and to give their savers and borrowers free shares worth an average of £900 to £1,000. Last night they were considering whether to match or better the Nationwide move, but other lenders will sooner or later be forced to follow suit, pushing down the cost of home loans to their lowest levels for thirty years.

Nationwide borrowers with a £50,000 repayment mortgage will be about £13 a month better off when the new standard rate of 6.99 per cent comes into effect in April. This is still not the lowest variable rate on offer, however, and there are many discounts or fixed rates available as lenders chase borrowers.

Brian Davis, the Nationwide chief executive, said that if others followed his society's move, customers in general would benefit by about £2 billion. "We have a clear commitment to remain a building society because we believe that in the long term our customers will be better off," he said. "We have no outside shareholders to satisfy, and so we can afford to run our business prudently on narrower margins."

Geoffrey Lister, the chief executive of Bradford & Bingley, which has also sworn

to remain a mutual organisation, said: "We are delighted that another major building society has taken steps to demonstrate the benefits of mutualism by passing on a large slice of future profits to its members. No plc banks will be able to reduce profits in this way in order to benefit customers who must take second place to shareholders."

Rob Thomas, building societies analyst at the City broker UBS, said: "The Nationwide move will make life very difficult for plc lenders who will look uncompetitive. The stock market appeared to agree, and bank shares were down last night."

Not surprisingly, the banks disagreed. Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, which was the first society to convert to a bank in 1989, said that the latest mortgage cuts were a short-term marketing ploy. "It is the last gasp of mutualism and there will be a further fall-out of mergers and acquisitions."

Michael Harden of the Members for Conversion action group said that building societies in general should change to public status as a matter of policy because the rewards on conversion "would beat any possible mutual package of benefits that they could come up with."

Pennington, page 23

Those looking for a mortgage bargain have never had such a wide choice. Offers include:

Scarborough Building Society: 0.25% fixed for one year

Northern Rock: 1.19% fixed until June 97 for first-time buyers

Greenwich: 3.99% fixed for two years for first-time buyers

Bradford & Bingley: 6.25% variable rate

Direct Line: 6.49% variable rate

Royal Bank of Scotland: 6.49% fixed for one year on 100% loan

Many societies are also offering "cashback" deals, including:

Cheshire, up to £10,000; Northern Rock, up to £9,000; National & Provincial, up to £7,500; Bradford & Bingley and Alliance & Leicester, up to £6,000; Yorkshire, up to £4,500.



The Princess of Wales cradles a child suffering from cancer during her visit yesterday to the hospital in Lahore founded by her host, Imran Khan. Page 3

Snowball rebuke over Prince

By Alan Hamilton

PUPILS at Eton College have been issued with a stern reminder that throwing snowballs near the school is forbidden, after an incident in which Prince William was set upon by classmates and had his clothes filled with snow.

A gang of boys reportedly rounded on the Prince, 13, and bombarded him with snow, stuffing it down his back and front. One pupil was quoted as saying: "We thought it was awful fun; there weren't any rules about throwing snow, so it seemed perfectly all right."

Yesterday a spokeswoman

for John Lewis, Eton's headmaster, said the no-snowball rule had nothing to do with any particular pupil. "Every time there is snow the boys are reminded that it is forbidden to throw snowballs within the school grounds, for reasons of safety. This rule has been in existence for 15 or 20 years."

Old Etonians expressed dismay. "In my day, the 1950s, if it snowed, the boys took us down to the Field (part of the college sports ground) and organised proper snowball fights," one said.



Scott accuses ministers of distortion

By Philip Webster
POLITICAL EDITOR

SIR RICHARD SCOTT dramatically entered the political battle over his report on the arms-to-Iraq affair last night by accusing ministers of selectively quoting his remarks to support their claims that the report had cleared them.

In a surprising twist, Christopher Muttukumaru, secretary to the Scott inquiry, wrote to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, suggesting

that words used by Sir Richard at his post-publication press conference — words subsequently seized on by ministers to back their claim that there had been no conspiracy — had been taken out of context.

Clearly implying that the judge is unhappy with the way ministers, including John Major, have seized on an answer he gave at the press conference, Mr Muttukumaru says in his letter that "out of context one-line answers" are no substitute for Sir Richard's considered views in his report.

Rob Cook, the shadow Foreign Secretary, said last night that Mr Muttukumaru's letter revealed that the "Government's distortion of the Scott report is starting to unravel."

The judge's unexpected intervention gave a big boost to the Opposition parties, which are trying to keep the Scott affair boiling until Monday's debate in the Commons. The intervention came as Labour claimed to have forced

Kenneth Clarke to admit that William Waldegrave had misled MPs over the affair.

A letter from the Chancellor to Andrew Smith, the shadow Chief Secretary, appeared to accept that his deputy did mislead Parliament, although not intentionally.

Mr Lang won strong backing from Tory MPs for his handling of the Government's Continued on page 2, col 5

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University club votes for women

By David Charter
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

NEARLY two centuries of clubland tradition ended yesterday when male members of the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club voted to admit women on equal terms.

The latest battle for women's rights in London's Pall Mall began when David Butler, Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford, whose great grandfather George helped found the club in 1830, announced his

resignation in a letter to *The Times* in January last year. Days later 69 heads of Oxford and Cambridge colleges also left the club in protest.

The result of a postal ballot of the 3,333 full members declared yesterday was in favour of opening the oak-panelled doors to women by 2,012 votes to 345. Sir Bryan Nicholson, club chairman, said the result was "overwhelming" and hoped the club would progress into the century with "renewed vigour."

Butler, the Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, said last night: "We are both very pleased. Obviously, it is a great club with a great history and it should not have been in this position."

The club said 71 per cent of members voted. The last ballot, in 1993, was also in favour but was declared void under club rules because only 49 per cent of members voted. There are currently 500 women associate members who are barred from the members bar.

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Stuck at low ebb with the slick and the shallow

Diane Abbott (Labour, Hackney N & Stoke Newington): "The unemployment rate for black males between the age of 18 and 24 is 60 per cent. That is the official figure: the actual figure is much higher."

Jacques Arnold (C, Gravesend): "Will the hon lady give way? She asked for it."

Ms Abbott: "Not from you, sweetheart."

There are days, and yesterday was one, when picking the funny bits from the previous night's *Hansard* provides the only relief from a mood of despair about the work of Parliament. Thursday's de-

spair was provoked not by the continuing futile, overblown exchanges between John Major and Tony Blair about the Scott report. The posturing here (on both sides) is simply tedious. We just switch off.

Nor was my despair provoked by any great issue of principle, any deception, any huge mistake, any shocking dereliction of duty. Politics would be more interesting if these were more common.

No, the bleak mood arose perhaps from weariness alone: from reporting one idiotic scrap too many. As I watched MPs discussing the founding of the *Sea Em-*



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

press in Milford Haven, something snapped.

The Opposition strove to turn this into a party political matter. Though, as MPs spoke, the promised inquiry had not even begun, ministers were accused already of failure and deception, one MP demanding that the Secretary of State "say sorry".

The latter's promise of an urgent and thorough investigation was called 'appalling'

complaint'. MPs who had come only yesterday to the complexities of five centuries' law and practice of marine salvage, MPs who could not distinguish between port and starboard and whose knowledge of tides, tugs and towlines would hardly fill one side of a small election leaflet, kept in with opinions as firm, and language as violent, as their heads were empty.

Speeches in the Commons

are almost never quoted verbatim at any length these days, the news media restricting ourselves to the sort of bite-size chunks for butterfly minds we suppose our readers to prefer and which, if we persist in providing nothing else, they will learn to expect and politicians will learn to deliver. Here, however, uncut except that I have omitted the names of the two Labour MPs criticised, is an extract from a debate on Wednesday morning.

Steven Norris expresses it better than I can. I omit the names of his targets because my purpose is not to criticise

the Labour Party. They behave as it seems we expect an Opposition to, and as, if they lose the next general election, the Tories will surely behave too.

The Minister for Transport in London (Mr Steven Norris): "One of the great advantages of Opposition is the opportunity to criticise without the slightest sense of responsibility. It has often been asserted that the less knowledge of a subject an Opposition Member has, the better he is able to set out an array of irrelevancies tangled together to form some basis of an argument. That is what we

heard from [an hon-Member]. His speech could be summarised by the glorious phrase 'As soon as possible just is not soon enough'. It is the sort of phrase of which the Opposition are extraordinarily fond, and I let it lie on the record in all its ludicrousness for others to judge."

"I have some experience of [another hon-Member] on safety matters. He is the sort of man who would terrify the average adult at the prospect of crossing a road, such is his fixation with turning any incident into a crisis, any crisis into a drama, and any drama into a political event."

Court says autistic woman can be sterilised

A woman has won her legal fight to have her autistic daughter sterilised. A judge at Edinburgh's Court of Session backed her claim that pregnancy would be "devastating" for her 32-year-old daughter, and that she could not be trusted to take contraceptive indefinitely.

The ruling was attacked by campaigners for the mentally disabled who said there was no evidence that the woman was sexually active. It is the first such order in Scotland in a case where sterilisation was opposed.

The 68-year-old mother, who cannot be named, told the court that her daughter had been on the Pill since she was 13 and feared she might suffer ill-effects from permanent use.

Red tape surplus

Britain has created more red tape while implementing Brussels directives than any other member of the EU except Germany, according to a survey by the European Commission. The Government's Department for Transport has identified 1,000 pieces of unnecessary legislation. But a Cabinet Office spokesman said: "It is not as bad as you might think. You actually need a regulation to get rid of a regulation. We are beginning to make an impression on the number of unnecessary regulations."

Bloom's closure

Bloom's, one of the most famous Jewish landmarks in the East End of London, has closed after 75 years. The Whitechapel restaurant shut last week after a big fall in turnover and losing £500,000 in four years. According to the *Jewish Chronicle* today, Bloom's destiny was made 25 years ago with the departure of most of the remaining Jewish residents from the area, and it had only survived because it was on a road to the suburbs, and near the City. It may have been hit by the introduction of a "red route".

Panorama wins

The BBC won a record 12 awards at the Royal Television Society's annual journalism and sports awards last night, including two for its *Panorama* interview with the Princess of Wales, which was named interview of the year. Martin Bashir, the interviewer, was journalist of the year. Channel 4 dominated the current affairs awards, with *The Dying Room*, about children being left to die at Chinese orphanages, taking the international current affairs award.

Asylum plea

Muhammad al-Mas'ari, the Saudi dissident, launched his appeal against deportation from Britain yesterday, claiming that his safety would be threatened if he was sent to Dominica. The 49-year-old professor alleged at the Immigration Appellate Authority hearing that the British Government wanted to expel him to protect its commercial relationship with Saudi Arabia, and that he would be a "reluctant pioneer" if he was forced to become the first person to seek asylum in Dominica.

New ball game

The former Scotland rugby captain Gavin Hastings has switched to American football, becoming kicker for the Scottish Claymores. Hastings, 34, will fly to America with the squad next month for a trial to play in the 1996 World League. The kicker is on the field for only a few minutes of each match. "I know how to kick a ball," he said. "The technique is not going to be dramatically different." The Claymores hope that his popularity will double their usual 9,000 crowd.

Major rekindles talks as summit hopes rise

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND RICHARD FORD

JOHN MAJOR began a fresh round of talks with senior politicians last night as he sought to break the deadlock in reaching a political settlement in Northern Ireland.

The initiative came as it was disclosed that the Home Secretary had been advised before the Docklands bombing that the IRA had developed a new mortar device and was moving weapons around.

The Prime Minister unexpectedly arranged a string of meetings with Unionist and nationalist leaders, raising expectations that he was preparing for an early summit with John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister.

David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, met Mr Major just 48 hours after the two last held discussions, while John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Lab-

our Party, joined Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland Minister, for talks.

Downing Street played down talk of an imminent breakthrough, but Irish politicians said that the new phase of talks "offered grounds for optimism". Talks between the two Prime Ministers are expected to take place next week.

The new round of discussions came as Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, underlined that the Government was open to discussions on issues including referendums, elections to an assembly and intensive "proximity talks" to bring the parties together. Irish sources suggested that Sir Patrick's acceptance of the possibility of all-party talks was a significant step from earlier ministerial suggestions that such a plan was "prema-



Mitchell: meeting today

ture". The new talks began on the eve of today's meeting between Mr Major and George Mitchell, who chaired the three-man international commission that drew up plans for disarming the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. Senator Mitchell, in London in his role as an intermediary in the Bosnian

peace process, said last night that President Clinton was not yet considering moves to ban Sinn Féin from raising funds in America after the collapse of the IRA ceasefire.

It was also disclosed in a report published last night that Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, was advised to maintain sweeping laws to combat terrorism even before the IRA ended its 17-month ceasefire.

He was given warning three weeks before the IRA attack at Docklands that terrorist organisations remained as powerful as ever, had developed a new mortar device and were moving arms around Northern Ireland.

Paramilitary organisations continued to intimidate jurors and witnesses, force traders to pay protection money and carried out robberies to raise funds, the annual review of the Prevention of Terrorism Act said. John Rowe, QC, author of the review, urged Mr Howard to retain the power to exclude individuals from England and Wales.

Bertie Ahern, the leader of Ireland's main opposition party, Fianna Fáil, last night held his first meeting with Gerry Adams since the collapse of the IRA ceasefire. Mr Ahern described the meeting at Dublin Castle, which lasted more than two hours, as one of his frankest encounters with Slim Fin.



Ursula Gregory: she claimed shortlist was racist

White teacher wins race case

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A TEACHER who claimed that Lambeth Council rejected her job application because she was white has won her case for racial discrimination.

Ursula Gregory took the south London council to an industrial tribunal when she failed to get on a shortlist of six for a full-time post, teaching basic mathematics to a class made up of ethnic minorities. She was told she did not know enough about equal opportunities, although she had been doing the job as a temporary tutor at the Fernside Centre, run by Lambeth's community education service, without complaint.

Mrs Gregory, from Swindon, said she was delighted by the tribunal's 17-page judgment. She will learn on Monday whether she is to receive financial compensation. She said: "I am very pleased and vindicated."

The Commission for Racial Equality, which had supported Mrs Gregory's claim, welcomed the decision as important.

"This should act as a reminder to all employers that applications should only be considered on relevant and job-related criteria," it said.

Mrs Gregory had claimed at the tribunal hearing in Croydon in September that she was at least as good as some of those shortlisted and could find no other explanation other than that she was being discriminated against on the ground of race.

She was one of 29 people — eight white and the others black or Asian — to apply for the post. After interviews for the job in January 1993, the final shortlist consisted of five black applicants and a Welsh woman. The job went to a black man.

The council told the tribunal that Mrs Gregory was turned down because she had failed to show sufficient understanding of equal opportunities issues. Monica Jones, a member of the selection panel, said: "Her use of words like 'immigrant' was emotive. And she didn't explore the issue of inner-city deprivation."

Prime Minister pleads with Thurnham to stay in party

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JILL SHERMAN

THE Prime Minister made a final attempt last night to prevent his Commons majority from slipping to two with a personal appeal to Peter Thurnham to stay in the parliamentary party.

Mr Thurnham, MP for Bolton NE, irritated at various aspects of the Government's recent performance, including its response to the Scott report, will announce today whether he is resigning the whip to sit in the Commons as an independent Conservative.

Although that means he will support the Government on most issues it will no longer be able to rely on him, and he would be treated officially as a minority party. The result, on paper, would be to halve the Government's majority to two. This would drop to one if it loses the Staffordshire South East by-election.

Mr Thurnham's main grievance with the Tories has been the decision of the local party in the Westmorland & Lonsdale constituency, where he lives, not even to interview him for the seat when Michael Jopling, the sitting MP, announced he was

standing down. Mr Thurnham had already announced he was standing down from his present seat, where he has a 185 majority over Labour.

He has had meetings with party whips and ministers this week, including William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell, the two most strongly criticised in the Scott report, but they have apparently failed to change his mind.

It appeared last night that he would again consult his constituency chairman before an announcement.

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Scott accuses ministers of distortion

Continued from page 1

response to the Scott report when he appeared before the 1922 Committee last night. But at least one MP, Quentin Davies (Stamford), expressed reservations, and there could be a handful of Tory rebels in Monday's debate.

The judge's intervention was prompted by the way ministers have consistently quoted him as saying that there was no conspiracy and no cover up, even though the report contains no such statement.

At his press conference last Thursday, however, Sir Richard was asked if it would be a fair summary to say that there had been no conspiracy and no cover up. Initially he replied: "I think that is a fair summary." But he went on to qualify his

answer. "Any soundbite answer, any summary one-line answer is bound to be a distortion of what I have taken care to express in the report," he said.

The judge is apparently irritated because ministers have relied on only the first part of his answer. Mr Muntakumar's letter says Sir Richard's answers "are being selectively used" adding: "Throughout the press conference, Sir Richard invited questions to read the report if they wanted to know his view on the subjects put to him."

In the Commons, yesterday, Tony Blair seized on Mr Clarke's apparent admission that Mr Waldegrave had misled Parliament. This related but separate row centres on a Treasury press release about

the report's contents which Labour claims wrongly claimed that Mr Waldegrave had been acquitted of misleading Parliament.

Mr Clarke yesterday accepted that the statement was wrong, saying: "William and I are both clear that the word 'intentionally' should have preceded 'misled'." Equally, it is quite clear from the context that this was a drafting error.

The question being addressed was whether Sir Richard Scott said William Waldegrave intentionally misled Parliament. As the press notice rightly says, the answer to this question is plainly 'no'.

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News black-out by Pakistan as Princess sees young cancer victims on controversial Imran visit

Tears of the royal caller who officially was not there at all

By ALAN HAMILTON IN LONDON AND ZAHIR HUSSAIN IN LAHORE

VISIBLY moved by the distress of young patients but seemingly oblivious to the political controversy surrounding her presence, the Princess of Wales yesterday toured Imran Khan's cancer hospital in Lahore.

Tension between the hospital authorities and the Pakistani government was apparent during the Princess's tour, as part of her private visit to Pakistan at the invitation of the country's former cricket captain.

Twenty plain-clothes security officers assigned by the local authority to guard the Princess were refused admission to the hospital when she arrived and were asked by Dr. Nousherwan Burki, the clinic's chief executive, to leave the building. Unusually, no official government representative accompanied the Princess, and her visit received no coverage from Pakistan's state-run television and radio. Officials and commentators



Moved: the Princess at the hospital

have accused Imran of using the visit of the self-styled "Queen of Hearts" for his own ends. He has announced plans to form a political party in opposition to Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister. Imran and his British wife, Jemima, daughter of the fi-

nancier Sir James Goldsmith, insisted that the Princess's visit was purely humanitarian, and to help raise funds for the hospital. Imran himself criticised the Pakistani government for failing to support the hospital. The Princess travelled to Pakistan in Sir James's aircraft.

Wearing traditional local dress of long shirt and baggy trousers, she displayed barely concealed grief as she toured wards of the Shanikar Khanum clinic, founded by Imran in memory of his mother, who died of cancer.

Tears filled her eyes as she met Adnan Ravana, a young cancer victim facing amputation of both legs in a desperate effort to save his life. "What can we do to save his life?" the Princess asked doctors and the boy's mother.

The Princess looked grim as she emerged from the hospital, which treats 8,000 patients a year and is run entirely on voluntary donations. She looked much more relaxed when, accompanied by Imran, his wife and his mother-in-law, Annabel Goldsmith, she attended a party to celebrate Eid, the Muslim festival marking the end of Ramadan. In accordance with Islamic custom, she covered her head with a scarf when a verse of the Koran was read.

The visit probably provided an emotional outlet for the Princess, who is passing through a difficult time, one woman staff member of the hospital said. Last night the Princess was 90 minutes late for a £200-a-head fund-raising dinner at the hospital. Most of the 500 guests were businessmen and friends of Imran Khan, including Wasim Akram, Pakistan's cricket captain.



The Princess with Imran and Jemima Khan, left, and Lady Annabel, right. The authorities claim her visit has a political motive

Designers hope to cash in on latest fashion

By ANDREW PIERCE

THE Princess of Wales, wearing Boud Street's version of the traditional Pakistani national costume, could start a new fashion trend, leading designers said last night.

Mass-produced versions of the Princess's shimmering pink silk shalwar kameez — loose-fitting trousers, long shirt, and dupatta wrapped around her neck — sell for as little as £15 in the East End of London. The Princess's outfit, made by the leading British designer Catherine Walker, cost about a hundred times as much and was more chic than conservative.

Pakistani political commentators, who have criticised her decision to visit Imran Khan, a political oppo-

nent of the Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, praised her taste in haute couture. She had learnt from the mistake of her last visit to Pakistan in 1991 when she offended some Muslims by walking around Lahore's ancient Badshahi Mosque in a dress that revealed her knees. Jemima Khan, wife of Imran Khan, wore a similar creation to the Princess yesterday, but adhered to strict Muslim tradition by covering her hair.

Zandra Rhodes, a leading British designer of Eastern silk and chiffon costumes, believed there would be a knock-on effect in Britain. Speaking from her home in California, where Princess Diana's taste in fashion was once again dominating the television news, Ms Rhodes said: "Princess

Diana looks elegant in whatever she wears. Whenever I go to India or Pakistan I always wear a shalwar kameez. They are cool, practical and please your hosts. I suspect now that she has been photographed wearing one, the Princess, who is something of a role model, could start a big trend."

Leading fashion sellers in London agreed. A photo spread of models wearing shalwar kameez was featured in a recent issue of Vogue. At Yazz International, in Baker Street, central London, similar outfits sell for between £300 and £600.

The Pakistani shop sells the country's leading designers, including Maheen and Tahira Tahillani, who designed outfits for Jemima Khan's wedding. Its most expensive designs

cost more than £3,000. Alaya Khan, who runs the business, said: "The shalwar kameez makes women feel so feminine because it is soft and flowing. They are becoming so popular in Britain that women even wear them as wedding suits."

"The colours this year are pastel, pinks and lime green. I thought Princess Diana looked beautiful. She is a wonderful advertisement for our national costume."

For those on a more modest income, however, the Pakistani High Commission in London recommends shops near Upton Park, the home of West Ham Football Club. "They cost as little as £15. Or you could try Wembley or Southall. Plenty there to choose from," the receptionist said.

Prince's temple visit welcomed by Hindus

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Prince of Wales will visit a new Hindu temple in London, the first and largest traditional temple outside India, next week.

He will spend an hour and a half at the ornate £12 million Swaminarayan Hindu temple at Neasden, north London, in a visit which has been warmly welcomed by the Hindu community and criticised by the evangelical Church Society.

Hindus have been travelling from throughout the country to visit and pray at

the temple since it opened last August. It is also deeply involved in education programmes for young Hindus and in social care programmes for all.

Buckingham Palace said the visit to the temple was being organised in response to an invitation. "This is an opportunity to visit what I understand is the most prominent Hindu temple in Britain and to see something of the religious and cultural life of the Hindu community," a spokesman said.

Murder riddle outlives last member of the cast

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE last survivor of the Dominici clan, at the centre of one of the most sensational and mysterious murder cases of the 1950s, has died in hospital.

Gustave Dominici, who died at the age of 76, claimed in August 1952 to have stumbled across the bodies of three British holidaymakers. The discovery led to one of the most tortuous of French murder investigations, which remains unresolved.

The victims were Sir Jack Drummond, a nutritional expert and former senior scientific adviser to the British Government, his wife Ann and their daughter Elizabeth. The Drummonds, on holiday from their home in Nottingham, had been camping overnight on land owned by the Dominici, a family of peasant farmers, at Lurs, near Digne-les-Bains in Provence.

Sir Jack, 61, and his wife, 46, had been shot. Their daughter, 10, had been battered to death with a rifle butt. Suspicion immediately fell on the Dominici but of the 17 adults in the family, Gustave, the



Gustave: his evidence sent father to prison

youngest son and then 33, was the only one who would talk. Gustave, who was alleged to have told someone in a neighbouring village that Elizabeth was still breathing when he found her, was sentenced to two months in prison for "depraved indifference" in failing to give her assistance. Then, at the end of a long interrogation, Gustave broke down and said that the murderer was his father, Gaston, patriarch of the clan, then

aged 75. Gustave's allegation was later backed by his brother Clovis, but then Gustave retracted his evidence, reaffirmed it, and retracted it again before a trial which became one of the most sensational France had known.

The affair, during which Gaston made a confession, also later retracted, saying that he had killed the Drummonds because Sir Jack had surprised him embracing Lady Drummond, gripped the country. At one point Gaston tried to commit suicide during a re-enactment of the murder by leaping into a ravine.

Regarded by some as a monster and nicknamed the Wild Boar of La Grande Terre — the name of his farm — Gaston was seen by others as a dignified old man who could not possibly have turned triple killer so late in life.

Sir Jack's position as a government adviser led to speculation that foreign agents might have been involved. Another theory was that his connections with the wartime resistance in the area were somehow involved.

Gaston Dominici was found guilty at the end of an 11-day



Sir Jack Drummond with his wife and daughter. Gustave claimed he stumbled across their bodies

trial in 1954, in the course of which members of the family shouted accusations against each other across the court. The old man was sentenced to be hanged and was held under death sentence for three years, but there was widespread disquiet about the conflicting evidence, gaps in the prosecution case and alleged partiality by the judge.

In 1957 Dominici was reprieved and given a sentence of life imprisonment instead. In 1960, eight years after the killings, he was pardoned on Bastille Day by President de Gaulle and released. He left prison frail and walking with sticks, but still vowing that he would find the real murderer. The local council protested

against his being allowed to return to the area where his supposed crime had been committed, and his family remained divided, but the old man continued to give interviews protesting his innocence and demanding a retrial. He died in 1965.

A further twist came with the alleged confessions of a German, Wilhelm Bartowski, who was claimed to have told British Special Investigation Branch officers that he and three colleagues had murdered the Drummonds during a robbery.

Gustave died in hospital in Digne-les-Bains, and was buried yesterday in the village cemetery at Peyruis, where his father also lies.

Road-rage attacker left me sobbing in street

EMMA WILKINS, a Times reporter, right, yesterday became another victim of road rage. She describes how a minor traffic accident escalated into a violent assault.

It was 10.15am, I was late for work, and the traffic along the Chelsea Embankment was moving like glue. As the car ahead slowed to a halt, I was forced to brake. The car behind never made it.

There was no damage to either vehicle. But the other driver, probably in her forties, leapt out of her car incoherent with rage, unleashing a volley of four-letter words. I got out to face her, initially too surprised to be scared.

"Look what you have done to my car," she screamed. I looked. Nothing. The collision had not even dislodged the snow from her car's bonnet. She swept the snow off and pointed to it again: "LOOK AT IT!" It was immaculate.

Having suggested calmly that we exchange addresses, I



Emma Wilkins: dreads driving after incident

pointed out that she had gone into my car — it was her fault. She lunged at me, grabbed my hair, and tried to smash my face on to the bonnet of her car. She was screaming at me: "F— look at it!"

I broke free, ran to my car and dialled 999 on my mobile telephone and said what was happening. My attacker ran at me again and tried to snatch the phone away.

I ran towards a stationary cab with two passengers in-

side, banged on the window and begged for help. "Sorry, love," the driver said, pulling away. I tried to flag down a motorcyclist. He did not stop. A cyclist ignored my plea for help. I rang the police again, sobbing down the phone.

The assailant came at me again and bit me on the face above my right eyebrow. I could smell alcohol on her breath.

People began to appear on the scene. A man in his fifties had seen everything from his flat and had telephoned the police. The woman sped off in her white estate car. I took down her registration number.

The police arrived within minutes. One officer said that if the skin on my face had been broken I would have needed an HIV test. I was shaking and went into deep shock. I dread driving again.

The AA said only a few cases of road rage went as far as physical assault but that the problem had been increasing. A recent survey showed that 90 per cent of drivers had experienced degrees of road rage, from obscene gestures to physical assault.

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Terrorist 'triggered bus bomb by standing up'

IRA sleeper fooled neighbours

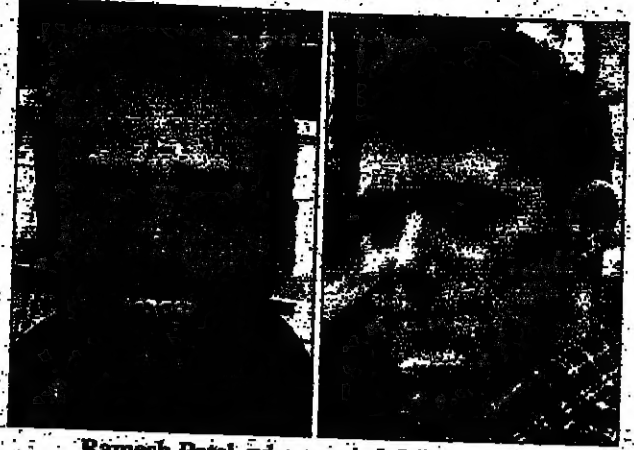
By Carol Midgley

THE bomb which killed IRA terrorist Ed O'Brien exploded close to his right leg, the inquest into his death was told yesterday.

O'Brien died from injuries to his chest and lower limbs when the bomb he was transporting exploded as he travelled on a 171 bus in the Aldwych, central London, on Sunday night. Dr John West, a Home Office pathologist, told Westminster Coroner's Court. Police believe the bomb was triggered as O'Brien stood up to get off the bus to plant it.

The inquest was told that O'Brien, 21, from Gorey, Co Wexford, had been living since last November at an address in Lewisham, southeast London. He had been visually identified at Westminster Public Mortuary on February 21 by Darren Cullen, a security officer and friend since childhood. In written evidence, he said O'Brien had lived at 117 George Lane, Lewisham.

Detective Superintendent William Emerson, from the Anti-Terrorist Branch, said police were still trying to



Ramesh Patel, who queried O'Brien's age, and Marcus Bowery, his next-door neighbour

identify O'Brien through fingerprint records. Asked by Dr Paul Knapman, the coroner, if O'Brien had used aliases, Mr Emerson said it was possible, "but I believe him to be Edward Miles O'Brien".

Dr Knapman adjourned the inquest until March 6.

From his bed, O'Brien played out the role of an IRA "sleeper", taking care not to appear neither too secretive nor too obtrusive. On Friday

and Saturday nights he would hire a mini-cab to take him on a £5 journey from Lewisham to The Swan pub in Stockwell to enjoy Irish evenings. Each morning he would catch a train to work as a labourer. He was for several weeks a pipe layer for RailTrack.

He had a telephone line installed in the first-floor flat, one of four in a converted detached house, and he not bother to make the number ex-

directory. He is understood to have paid his £75-a-week rent in cash to the landlord and landlady, believed to be Anthony and Marie Carley, who ran The George pub down the road until Mr Carley's ill health forced him to give it up.

When detectives broke into O'Brien's flat they found a large quantity of explosives. Neighbours were stunned to find they had been living within yards of what they were yesterday calling an IRA bomb factory.

The corner house, with its huge garden and garage, is shabby but neatly kept. Yesterday a pane of glass in the front door was boarded up, indicating that the police had forced an entry.

O'Brien's next-door neighbour, Marcus Bowery, 22, is a barman at the Halfway to Heaven pub in Charing Cross, central London. He was working there on the night O'Brien's bomb exploded and heard the bang. "I'm just glad they didn't go off in the house," he said. "If he made that mistake on the bus, it's possible."

The manager of the Easy Rider mini-cab firm near O'Brien's home said: "I picked him up a couple of times and some of the lads got a few fares from him. I'm glad that he took the bus that night and not one of our cabs."

Bar staff at The Swan, a big south London venue for live bands, many of them Irish, said: "You get literally hundreds of Irishmen in here and half of them are probably called O'Brien. It's a good place to mingle and stay anonymous if you wanted to."

Ramesh Patel, 44, who runs the shop where O'Brien often stopped on his way to work for cigarettes, said: "He used to come in here regularly, and he always asked for the same thing: 20 Benson & Hedges. He looked too young to smoke — about 15 or 16 — and one of the first times he came in I asked him how old he was."

"He would not say a word except for asking for his cigarettes. I last saw him about a week to ten days ago. It's amazing what was going on behind the closed doors of his flat. I can't believe it."

Yesterday, on George Lane, nobody else could either.



A police guard remains outside O'Brien's first-floor flat in George Lane, Lewisham

Legs shaved by laser could stay smooth for life

By Dominic Kennedy

WOMEN may never need to shave their legs again as British scientists come close to solving the problem of unwanted hair.

A breakthrough in laser technology could revolutionise the cosmetics industry, making creams, electrolysis and women's razors redundant. The Ruby Laser, developed in Wales, has produced "extremely successful" results during a trial by plastic surgeons. It could be available for clinical and cosmetic use within a few years. Each machine costs £70,000 but, if popular, the price would fall.

The idea came by chance to Professor Marc Clement of the Swansea Institute of Higher Education, who was experimenting with lasers ten years ago when he accidentally struck his arm with a beam of light. "I noticed later that the area hit by the laser was bald and the hair has never grown back," he said.

Three years ago he mentioned his accident to David Gault, a plastic surgeon from the Restoration of Appearance and Function Trust at Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, northwest London. Professor Clement is also director of research and

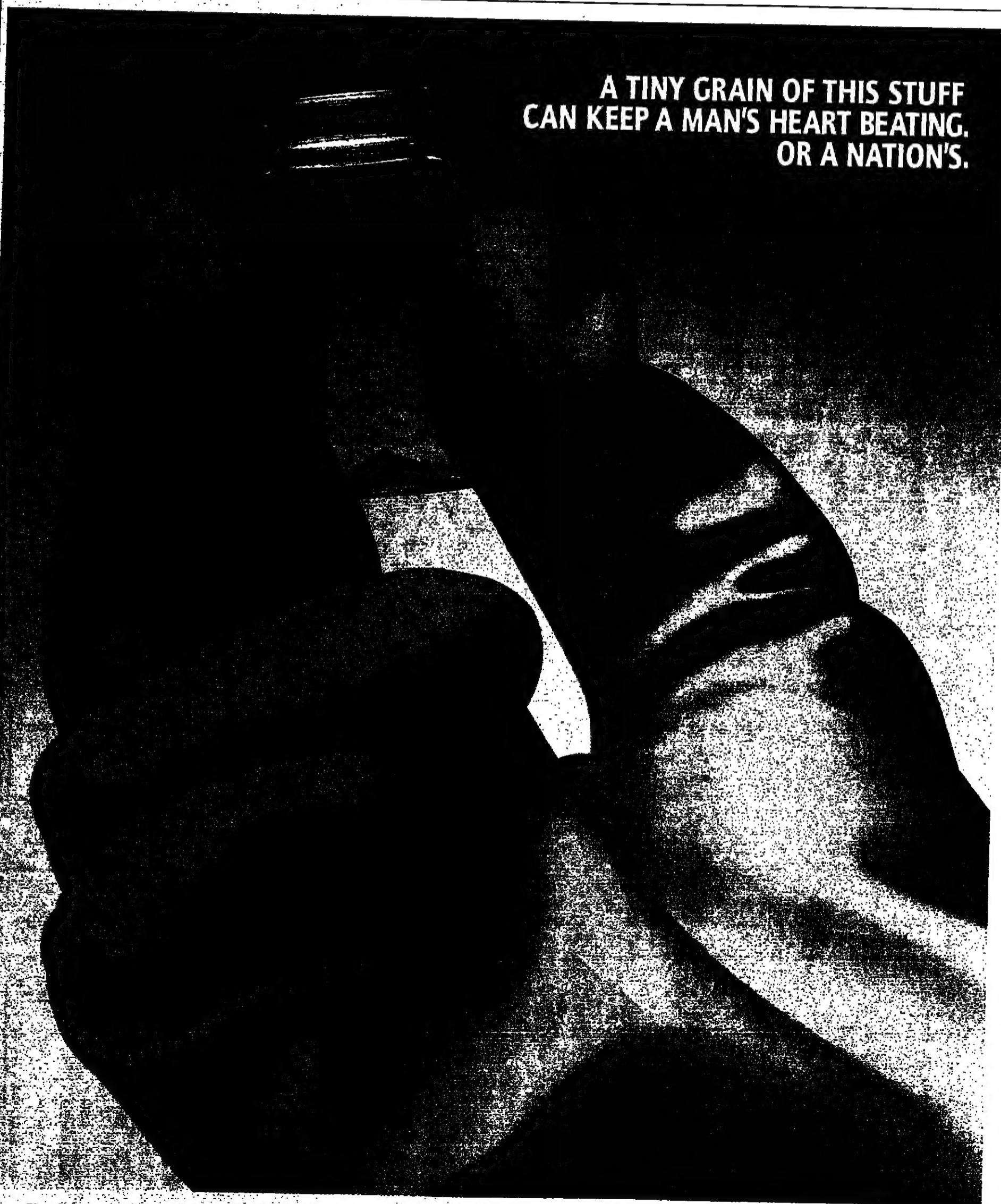
development at the laboratories of SLS (Wales) in Llanelli, Dyfed, which makes lasers to treat birthmarks. They created a prototype laser specifically to remove unwanted hair. Trials began six months ago.

So far a third of the patients have had no hair grow back after three sessions. Another third have seen less than half their hair regrow. A fourth kept all their hair.

The laser emits a 5mm beam of red light directed at hair follicles. The light is absorbed by granules of melanin — the pigment in hair — and turned into heat energy. In theory, the follicle should be destroyed by frying the granules. The surrounding skin is unharmed.

The technique works best on dark hairs because they contain more pigment. This is useful because they are also the most visible and unsightly. More experiments will be needed to test its effectiveness with redheads.

Compared to existing depilation methods, the laser is speedy, relatively painless, efficient and possibly permanent," said Mr Gault. "It has tremendous potential both in the clinical and cosmetic fields."



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Driving for hours delays men on the road to fatherhood

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

COMMUTING by car can cut your chances of becoming a father. Couples take four to six months longer to achieve a pregnancy if the man spends more than three hours a day in his car, according to a study by French researchers.

The reason was probably lower sperm counts caused by the increased temperature of the testicles from sitting so long in a fixed position, said Dr Roger Miesse of a masculine fertility centre at the University Hospital in Toulouse. Above a certain temperature, sperm production

ceases. Dr Miesse was speaking at a London press conference at which Dr Stewart Irvine of the Medical Research Council's reproductive biology unit at Edinburgh, reported declining sperm counts in Scots, the first time such declines have been identified in Britain.

A team led by Dr Irvine reports in the *British Medical Journal* that they studied 577 semen donors. The men split into four roughly equal groups, born either before 1959, from 1960-64, 1965-69 or 1970-74. The younger the man,

the lower the sperm count. The decline appears to be about 2 per cent a year, falling from 98 million sperm per millilitre in the oldest group to 78 million in the youngest.

Dr Irvine says that these levels are unlikely to affect fertility yet, but the trend is worrying. "If sustained it would mean that men born about the middle of next century would have sperm levels low enough to be of great concern."

The causes of the decline remain a mystery, especially as Dr Miesse's group in Toulouse has found no similar decline there. But studies in Paris and in Denmark have shown sperm counts falling.

In an editorial in the *BMJ*, Professor David de Kretser of Monash University in Melbourne suggests that chemicals in the environment may be the culprit. Traces of chemicals that mimic the effect of the oestrogen hormones may influence the foetus in the womb, producing long-term effects that limit the later ability to produce sperm.

A huge range of such chemicals could be responsible, Dr Irvine says. Pesticides, plasticisers, industrial chemicals, the Pill and soy-based foods, which contain plant oestrogens, are all possibilities.

Other factors, such as car driving or smoking, may also play a role. In a third *BMJ* paper, Professor Marilyn Vine of the University of North Carolina points out that sperm counts of smokers are 16-25 per cent lower than those of non-smokers. The decline in sperm counts over the past 50 years is consistent with trends in smoking, she argues.

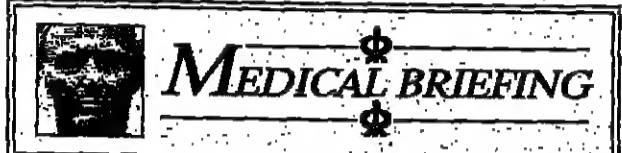
Several studies have been launched to try to confirm that the effect is real, and to find the cause. The French discovery about car driving came from one such study, drawing data from Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Denmark.

The data came from more than 4,000 couples in which the wife had become pregnant. Achieving pregnancy had taken longer when the husband spent long hours in the car, and subsequent tests by the researchers provided the likeliest explanation.

"Men whose scrotal temperature is in the low normal range, say about 33C to 34C, don't have a problem," Dr Miesse explained. "They can experience a rise of a degree or so without stopping sperm production. But those whose temperatures are already high, up to 36C, will stop sperm production altogether."

The same effect explained why bakers tended to have lower fertility, he said.

Castration could scupper sailor's Olympic ambition



TESTOSTERONE, the hormone which is produced in the male from the testes, has a profound influence on the development and maintenance of both the physical and mental characteristics of the male. It increases muscle bulk, reduces fat and enhances the competitive spirit as well as maintaining a man's libido. Not surprisingly, testosterone supplements are among the many substances which are banned in athletics.

The ban is endangering the ambition of Kevin Hall, one of America's outstanding younger Laser dinghy helmsman, who was hoping to represent the United States in the summer Olympics this year in Atlanta.

Five years ago, while an undergraduate, Mr Hall developed cancer in one of his testicles and, 48 months later, it was found in the other testicle. Cancer of the testes becomes bilateral in 3 per cent of cases. After four years and three major operations, and presumably, chemotherapy, he is in excellent trim but, as he has now been castrated, needs to take testosterone injections to preserve his bones, his strength and his sex life.

Mr Hall has never made any secret of his surgical condition with the sailing authorities and has asked both the United States and the International Olympic Com-

mittees to allow him to take as much testosterone as would be needed to give him blood levels of the hormone corresponding to the lowest levels found in men of his age group.

Despite enthusiastic support from such varied institutions as the University of California Medical School, the American Civil Liberties Union, it seems that Mr Hall's hopes of being in the sailing team will be frustrated by the rules.

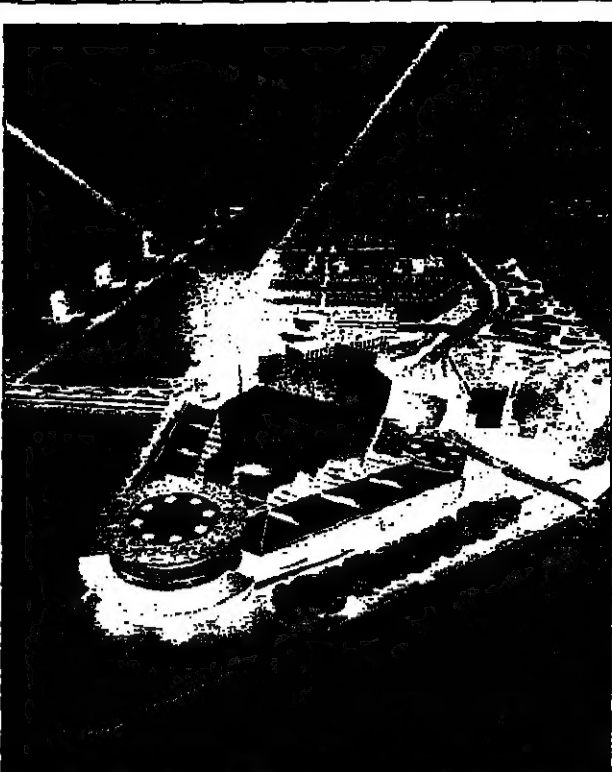
Cancer of the testes is the most common cancer to affect men under the age of 40 and its incidence is rising. Fortunately, treatment is one of the success stories of post-war medicine. Professor Tim Oliver, of St Bartholomew's and the Royal London Hospital said that the latest figures from his unit had showed a 97 per cent three-year survival rate; for several years, more than 90 per cent of those attending the test units have been able to expect a permanent cure.

Professor Oliver, however, has treated several patients with advanced disease, with chemotherapy alone. Not only have they survived but they have preserved their testes and their child-bearing capability. His results are due for publication soon.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD



The waterfront site of the development as it looks today and, right, the design for the Lowry Centre



Lowry's towering talent wins £64m for lottery landmark

By Alexandra Frean

A LOTTERY grant of £64 million was announced yesterday to celebrate L.S. Lowry with an giant arts centre in his home city of Salford, as a landmark for the millennium.

The announcement coincided with the twentieth anniversary of the artist's death. Bill Hinds, leader of the city council, said that the news was the "greatest in Salford's living memory". The Lowry

Centre on the Salford Quays waterfront will contain a central art gallery, a children's gallery, a virtual reality centre, a 1,650-seat theatre and a 400-seat auditorium. It will be part of a larger hotel, restaurant and shopping complex and will cost a total of £96.4 million. Mr Hinds forecasts it will create 6,500 jobs.

Salford Art Gallery has been unable to display more than half its collection of 300 Lowrys due to financial con-

straints and a lack of space. The award is the first joint initiative between the Arts Council, the Millennium Commission and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The commission also announced £12.3 million for Mile End Park, East London, £5.6 million for an environment project in Peterborough, £243,600 for St Martha's church in Bromsgrove, Nottinghamshire, and £150,000 for Grayswood village hall, Surrey.



Lowry: jobs boost for his home city

New York artwork offends Cornwall

By Dalya Alberge, Arts Correspondent

A VIDEO of a nude woman urinating into a fountain, on show at the publicly funded Newlyn Art Gallery in Penzance, has prompted an outcry from the local community.

The video, part of an exhibition by seven New York artists, has been branded pornographic. Local anger has been fuelled by news that the exhibition received £7,500 from the Arts Council.

Robert Dorrien-Smith, owner of Tresco Island, Isles of Scilly, and a local patron of the arts, is so disgusted he has withdrawn sponsorship he had set aside for a forthcoming exhibition. "Taxpayers' money is being poured into flying seven people from New York for a gallery that was set up under a charitable trust to promote the work of west Cornwall artists," he said. "In recent times, the rather loopy art establishment has got its grip on it. I doubt whether they are artists."

Lilla Locurto and William Outcault, who made the video, see it as a satire on *Mannikin Pis*, the sculpture of a little boy urinating, which is always ignored. This is a piece about gender. It's an important piece of work. It was well acclaimed in the States."

Emily Ash, director of the gallery, said: "In Brussels, they celebrate by dressing up that statue once a year. In the nearby square is a similar girl peeing, which is always ignored. This is a piece about gender. It's an important piece of work. It was well acclaimed in the States."

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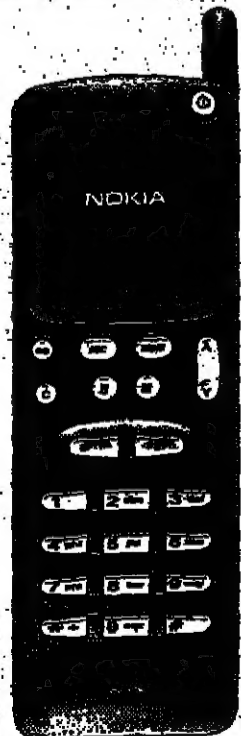
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'Token gestures' fail to curb racism and sexism

Ingrained discrimination frustrates police reform

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

BULLYING and racist and sexist jokes remain part of police life across England and Wales, according to a report published yesterday.

Resistance to policies promoting equal opportunities for women and members of the ethnic minorities has grown in a service with a strongly hierarchical and predominantly white male ethos.

The report, by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, says that people in the police service are divided about the benefits of an equal opportunities policy. It warns senior officers that token gestures could be masking continuing subtle discrimination.

Welfare officers told the authors, who looked at 13 forces, including Greater Manchester, Surrey and the West Midlands, of increasing reports of "oppressive bullying". The report found evidence of "continuing high levels of sexist and racist

Good saleswomen were driven out of a major British insurance company by sexual harassment. Their experience shows how difficult it is for women to succeed in traditionally male jobs, according to researchers who interviewed 45 managers. Their report, published in the British Sociological Association's journal *Work, Employment and Society*, argues that the deep-seated nature of sexual harassment in sales trapped women managers in a vicious circle. If they complained, they were "unstable" for men's jobs.

banter, perhaps more covert and subtle than before, but no less destructive. There were many stories of harassment or discrimination against civilian staff."

Associations representing staff accused managers of failing to challenge poor behaviour. They claimed that while wholesale discrimination had ceased, cases of harassment were often not reported for fear of the consequences.

The report - *Developing Diversity in the Police Service*, published by the Home Office - said that the idea of a diverse workforce was proving slow to take root. Entrenched attitudes were frus-

trating efforts to press for equal opportunity policies.

The report says that a radical change in approach is needed. "The view has to be articulated that equal opportunities is a 'bolt-on' soft option, necessary to satisfy the law but related more to politically correct ideas about race and gender than to 'real police work'."

The report, by Peter Hermitage, assistant inspector of constabulary, says that all sectors of the community would be reassured by an anti-sexist, anti-racist and anti-homophobic force.

Female officers and those from ethnic minorities are

found disproportionately at the level of constable and under-represented in the higher ranks. The percentage of women and members of the ethnic minorities in ranks up to that of chief inspector has slightly increased, but their representation in the top ranks is almost unchanged since 1990.

Women constituted 13.7 per cent of all officers in forces excluding the Metropolitan Police in 1994: only 3 per cent at the ranks of assistant chief constable and above, 2.6 per cent at superintendent level, 2.9 per cent at chief inspector, 3.8 per cent at inspector, and 6.8 per cent at sergeant. Of constables, women constituted 16.4 per cent.

Members of ethnic minorities constituted 1.4 per cent of all police officers in 1994: 1.6 per cent of constables, 0.6 per cent of sergeants, 0.4 per cent of inspectors, and 0.1 per cent of chief inspectors. There were no members of ethnic minorities at the level of assistant chief constable and above.



Thought for paws: Luke the Labrador with Warrant Officer Jeffrey Pedrick

Treading softly, the dog of war

A HUMBLE foot soldier in the war on terrorism demonstrated the latest equipment yesterday. Luke the sniffer dog is trying out protective boots to protect paws for dogs who go where humans fear to tread.

Army dogs are at risk from shards of glass and debris when they go into bombed areas to check for further explosives. The Veterinary Corps is now testing strong, lightweight material to reduce the risks.

"Sniffer dogs are often required to work in hazardous environments and can suffer damage to their pads and feet," Major Neil Smith said. The bombing at South Quay added urgency to the problem, he added. "There was a field of horrible glass."

Luke, a three-year-old black Labrador, tried the woven-nylon boots at Aldershot, Hampshire. The handler, Warrant Officer Jeffrey Pedrick, said: "We started slowly, putting them on at meal times because that is a time he enjoys. He is very happy with them."

Cold weather fails to harm fish supplies

FISH supplies and quality have held up well despite the weather. Whiting is in top condition, and at £1 to £1.60 a lb is good value.

A drop in the price of plaice to £2 a lb for whole fish or £3.20 for fillets, reflects a drop in quality, and crab is in short supply, with the price up to £3 a lb cooked. Cornish mackerel are around £1 a lb, but sprats at 90p a lb are suggested as the best buy.

The season for British rhubarb has just begun, and prices range from 69p to £1.29 a lb, while pink grapefruit are about 26p each.

Promotions include:

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1.8 kg, coffee and cream gâteau (10 portions) £1.99, mini Cornish pasties 99p for 4. Marks & Spencer: New Zealand lamb leg knuckle £4.99 a kg, lite vegetable pizza £1.99 for 245g, chicken casserole with herb dumplings £2.29 for 454g, frozen skinless cod fillets £3.99, loose white seedless grapes 99p a lb. Morrison's: prawn masala balti and naan bread £1.99, cod fillet £4.82 a kg, jumbo had-dock £5.93 a kg, neptune mackerel fillets 65p for 200g, mussels 99p a kg. Sainsbury's: topside/silverside-top rump £4.39 a kg, pork ribs Chinese style £2.09 for 720g, white finger rolls 99p for 20, Cumberland pie £1.99 for 550g, cucumbers 59p each. Sainsbury's: premium pork sausages £1.19 for eight (454g), fresh lamb shoulder £2.99 a kg, four fresh chicken fillets £4.29 for 510g, red potatoes £1.30 for 2.5 kg, Pizzeria margherita pizza (cheese and tomato) 99p for 330g. Sainsbury's: fresh smoked cod fillet £1.57 a lb, chicken korma £1.24 for 300g, English mature white cheddar £1.74 a lb, premium white bread 39p for 800g, black South African grapes 89p per lb. Tesco: fresh large eggs £1.25 for 12, frozen farmhouse mixed vegetables 89p for 759g, Golden Delicious apples 39p a lb, two dairy cream doughnuts 79p, frozen raspberry torte 99p. Waitrose: fresh dressed Cromer crab (large) £2.49, extra fine asparagus £1.69 per pack, black figs 29p each, Greek honey £1.99 for 454g.

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Chirac pledges to scrap land-based nuclear missiles

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT Chirac announced last night that France would stop producing fissile nuclear material, scrap its land-based nuclear missiles and dismantle the Hades short-range mobile missile.

In a live television interview, outlining a shakeup of the armed forces and defence industries, he sought to recapture the moral high ground after worldwide outrage over French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, which ended last month.

The President said he had decided to close down France's only factory manufacturing plutonium and weapons-grade enriched uranium at Pierrelatte, south of Lyon. He said the country had plentiful stocks for its weapons needs. "France will no longer produce fissile material," he said. "Naturally, it has what it needs to make its arms."

The President said 18 ageing land-based nuclear missiles on the southern Plateau d'Albion would be scrapped and France would henceforth rely on four missile-firing submarines, and aircraft as the two arms for its nuclear deterrent.

In a gesture to reassure Germany, M. Chirac said he had decided after talks with Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, to dismantle the Hades nuclear missile, mothballed in 1991, but which worried Bonn because it could only hit German soil if fired.

Under the sweeping plans to overhaul the French defence establishment, troop numbers will be drastically reduced, compulsory military service phased out and the armaments industries streamlined.

The French Government is under increasing pressure to reduce spending in the run-up to European economic and monetary union, and with the

end of the Cold War most analysts say reform of the cumbersome French military machine is long overdue. But the far-reaching plans to restructure this most hallowed of French institutions and create an all-professional army by the year 2002 may carry heavy political costs.

The plan to cut troops, end conscription and rationalise the military-industrial complex mark the most radical shake-up in French defence since General Charles de Gaulle ordered the return of French soldiers from Algeria in 1962 after the Algerian war of independence.

"France must achieve a profound reform of its military and defence machine," M. Chirac warned his ministers earlier this week.

The President held a meeting with military heads and ministers at a special Defence Council yesterday, before presenting his reforms on national television. On Wednesday the Government unveiled plans to merge the two largest aircraft makers, Aérospatiale and Dassault Aviation within two years, and announced the privatisation of Thomson SA, one of Europe's leading de-

fence electronics companies. The changes are intended to reduce competition within the defence industry while the Dassault-Aérospatiale merger will forge a giant aviation company with annual sales of £8 billion, as a prelude to building joint European ventures that can compete with US defence contractors.

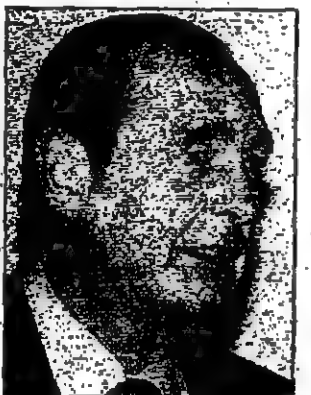
The move to end conscription by 2001 and create a professional military corps along British lines is the most politically volatile of the measures. Currently, ten months of military service is compulsory for all French males.

M. Chirac has rejected the idea of holding a referendum on ending conscription, but a national debate will discuss whether to transform the system into a compulsory form of civilian national service, or instead adopt an entirely voluntary system.

Up to half the country's ground troops, now numbering 240,000, are likely to be axed over the next five years under the Chirac plan. The cuts could save an estimated £6 billion (£780 million) a year, according to a parliamentary report published yesterday, but much of the money would be reinvested in regions most affected by job losses.

The 8,500-strong Foreign Legion is the country's only sizeable all-volunteer force, and most defence analysts agree the existing heavy conscript army is ill-adapted to the rapid foreign military interventions required in the post-Cold War era.

The tradition of military conscription stretching back to the French Revolution is widely revered as a way of instilling literacy and patriotism in raw recruits. Some critics also say the overall quality of French troops will deteriorate if the draft is abolished.



Chirac seeks profound reform of the military



A Royal Air Force Chinook hovers on patrol above Mount Igman as part of Nato's Implementation Force

Bosnian leader rushed to hospital

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

THE BOSNIAN President, Alija Izetbegovic, who symbolised the struggle for a multi-ethnic Bosnia through 43 months of war, was taken to Sarajevo's Kosevo hospital yesterday morning with heart trouble.

Presidential guards sealed the doors to the medical clinic, barring access to journalists, but a spokesman said the ailing President was in a stable condition.

As members of Bosnia's collective presidency convened an emergency session to designate a temporary successor, the Bosnian Serb leadership, which has breached numerous obligations established by the Dayton peace plan, issued a press release saying it would re-establish relations with the Nato peace force and the Bosnian Government.

Serbs living in the five Serb-held suburbs that are due to

revert to government control next month stepped up their exodus, jamming access roads out of the suburbs with tractors, cars and lorries packed with their possessions. Several buildings burnt in their wake, including a kindergarten.

The Serb military and civilian leadership severed all ties with the Nato force and the

Bosnian Government nearly two weeks ago when two of its senior officers were arrested by the Bosnian Government and handed to the UN War Crimes Tribunal. They agreed to renew ties with Nato after last weekend's Rome summit. Since the 60,000-strong Nato force arrived in Bosnia to implement the Dayton peace

plan, the Bosnian Serbs have violated a number of key provisions.

Their breaches have included sniping at civilian buses and Nato troops, abducting 16 Muslim civilians, launching a rocket at a Sarajevo tram, killing one woman, regularly impeding freedom of movement across Serb-controlled territory, shielding indicted war criminals and possessing heavy weapons within the 12.5-mile exclusion zone.

In spite of these violations, Nato officials assessed the Bosnian Serbs to be in "general compliance" with the terms of the peace accord.

Paris: France became the first European Union country to restore diplomatic ties with federal Yugoslavia to the level of ambassador since war erupted in Bosnia in 1992, signalling an end to Belgrade's isolation. (Reuters)

Dayton deal 'fragile'

THE Dayton peace agreement to Bosnia could disintegrate if its civilian aspects are not implemented, Senator George Mitchell said yesterday (Leila Linton writes).

"The events of the past few weeks have shown us that the stand-off agreed at Dayton is fragile and needs all the support that we can give it," he said. Senator Mitchell announced a \$1 million ini-

tiative by the recently formed International Crisis Group, which he chairs, to help strengthen peace in Bosnia.

The group will focus on the non-military aspects of the agreement. These include plans for the return of refugees, preparations for elections throughout Bosnia by September, the arrest of suspected war criminals, and investigation of atrocities.

EUROPEAN SUMMARY

IMF gives Yeltsin poll boost

Moscow: The International Monetary Fund yesterday gave President Yeltsin a valuable pre-election boost by agreeing to lend Moscow \$10 billion (£6.5 billion) to bolster Russian economic reforms (Richard Beeston writes).

Jean-Michel Camdessus, IMF managing director, said he was satisfied that Russia would comply with the strict conditions attached to the loan and predicted that the package would make reforms in Russia "truly irreversible".

Robert Skidelsky, page 16

Jackal accused of café attack

Paris: Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, 45, the Venezuelan-born terrorist known as Carlos the Jackal, who is in jail here for bombings and hijackings, has been charged over a 1974 grenade attack at a Paris café which killed two people and wounded 34.

In 1992, France sentenced Carlos in absentia to life in prison for killing two French counter-intelligence agents in 1975. Carlos was seized in Sudan in 1994. (AP)

Bildt seeks divorce

Stockholm: Carl Bildt, 46, the former Swedish Prime Minister and mediator in the former Yugoslavia, has filed for divorce from his wife, Mia, 42, a Stockholm court said. The couple separated before his mission in Bosnia. (Reuters)

Snow rescue

Madrid: Passengers stuck for 36 hours on two snowbound trains in northern Spain, surviving on cheese from a nearby farm, were rescued yesterday by Civil Guard tanks (Edward Owen writes).

£3m tag on Château Jackson

BEN MACINTYRE

THE town of Pont-Château in central France is reeling in the rumour that the pop star Michael Jackson may be planning to buy the Château de Chabennes near by.

The great 15th-century castle, with seven towers and 82 rooms, is on sale at an asking price of £125 million (£325 million).

Last week the French newspaper, *La Nouvelle République du Centre Ouest*, reported that Mr Jackson was thinking of buying the building and that "an agency has contacted the current propri-

etor of the fortress in his name."

But Philippe Marec, the head of the company that bought the château in 1989, has denied being approached by the singer or his agents. But like everything associated with the world's most peculiar pop star, this has not prevented a flood of rumour to the effect that Mr Jackson may soon be a neighbour.

Voici magazine declared last week that Mr Jackson was "seriously interested" in buying the vast castle in the Bouzanne Valley, south of

Tours. Residents say they have seen "American businessmen" eating in local restaurants.

The most convincing argument to support the theory that Mr Jackson may move in is the ease with which he could travel, via the airport at Châteauroux, to the Euro-Disney theme park outside Paris. "When one takes into account the taste of Bambi (as Mr Jackson is known in France) for the World of Mickey, this last factor could be decisive," *La Nouvelle République* said.

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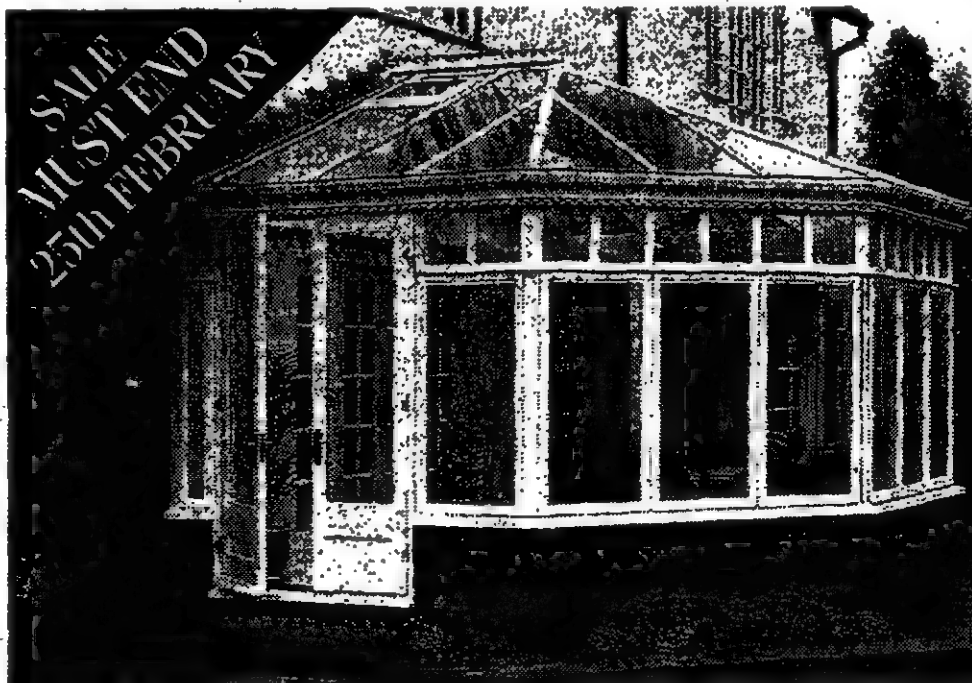
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Frail Fahd resumes rule as Gulf faces turmoil

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN MANAMA, BAHRAIN

THE ageing King Fahd confronted the Cassandras yesterday and resumed his duties as monarch of Saudi Arabia, just three months after he handed the reins of power to his half-brother.

Crown Prince Abdullah took over power in the world's largest oil producer after King Fahd suffered a minor stroke in November. The announcement yesterday that the 74-year-old monarch was back at the helm comes as many of the kingdom's allies in the six-



member Gulf Co-operation Council are in a state of political turmoil that is causing growing anxiety in the West. Some of the emirates as

well as Saudi Arabia are facing increasing internal pressure for political change.

After this week's failed anti-government coup in Qatar, the deposed Emir issued a statement claiming that, rather than being his handiwork, the coup attempt was part of a popular movement against his son, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who had toppled him last year while he was holidaying in Switzerland.

What is disconcerting is that the former Emir made his announcement from his sanctuary, a hotel in Abu Dhabi, which is part of the United

Arab Emirates and supposedly an ally of Qatar inside the pro-Western Gulf council.

The fact that a family squabble of this magnitude should be conducted from the soil of a friendly state is adding to the unease in the Gulf, said an Arab official. "The question everyone is asking is whether the Saudis are covertly backing the unrest in Qatar to punish its new leader for his maverick policies."

Last December the modernising, 46-year-old Emir staged an unprecedented walkout from the council's annual

summit over a dispute about the way a Saudi was chosen as the organisation's new secretary-general, Sheikh Hamad has also upset the Saudis by showing support for democratic reforms.

Iran and other pro-Islamic foes of the autocratic kingdoms are delighted at the lack of unity in the Gulf council. To add to its woes, Bahrain, which is also facing an internal revolt from impoverished Shia Muslims, denied claims by Qatar that it was sheltering some of the perpetrators of Tuesday's attempted coup against Sheikh Hamad.

The strains inside the Qatari ruling family have been heightened since Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, the deposed ruler, still controls about \$3 billion (£1.94 billion) of the emirate's reserves and has refused to hand it back. The country is facing cash-flow problems as well as difficulty in financing the large investment needed to develop its huge gas reserves.

Strict security has been imposed in Qatar after a threat by the deposed Emir to seize back his throne. Some Arab security experts believe Tuesday's round-up of 100 men

loyal to the former ruler was a pre-emptive strike by his son to try to prevent a full-scale insurrection against him.

The danger is that the power squabble in Qatar could spill over and affect the neighbouring Gulf states, all of which have similar regimes in which family ties and loyalties loom large. The general unrest is also occurring as dwindling financial resources are putting the future of many of the Gulf rulers at risk.

In Saudi Arabia, television pictures of the overweight and diabetic King Fahd hobbling with a stout walking stick did

little to restore confidence in either his or the country's immediate future. He is very frail, said a Gulf official watching the broadcast.

His return to power also raises questions about the succession, though most analysts are convinced that it will pass to Prince Abdullah.

To dissidents in the Gulf, and those in exile here and in the West who find the human rights abuses that are rife in the region distasteful, this week's events have reinforced a view that a period of profound change in the world's richest oil zone is close.

Palestinian State hopes raised by Israel-PLO talks

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister's most senior adviser has confirmed he held secret talks with Palestinian leaders, including discussion of an independent Palestinian State as a means of ending the conflict.

Yossi Beilin, Minister without Portfolio in the office of Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, said he had met Abu Mazen and other Palestinian leaders in various places in Europe and Israel over the past 12 months. Mr Mazen is on record as saying there will be a new Palestinian State within the next two years.

Mr Beilin said his discussions with Mr Mazen had given him cause to be more hopeful about reaching a lasting peace agreement.

"As a result, I got a picture that gave me a whole lot more optimism about the possibility of reaching agreement," Mr Beilin said in response to an article in yesterday's *Haaretz*, the Israeli daily. But he denied suggestions that any final agreement had been signed between the Israelis and Palestinians. "I did not have the authority to reach some sort of agreement and we did not reach a real agreement."

The talks included debate over a proposal to grant Palestinians full statehood but without an army. Mr Peres is reported to have rejected this particular proposal, preferring a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians. Other issues which came up

for discussion included allowing 140,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank to remain under Israeli sovereignty. Under proposals discussed by Mr Beilin and Mr Mazen, in return for such sovereignty, Israel would agree to hand over the Jordan Valley to the Palestinians by 2007.

One of the main obstacles in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations is the future of Jerusalem, which both sides claim as a political and religious capital. The Muslim holy sites, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa mosque, stand on the Temple Mount, the site of the Jewish temple in biblical times. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have discussed the possibility of such sites being designated special or extra-territorial areas, outside the complete jurisdiction of either side.

Mr Beilin said he had not presented Mr Peres with any final document, but he discussed with him possible ways forward in negotiations.

Uri Savir, director-general of the Israeli Department of Foreign Affairs, last night described Mr Beilin's meetings with Mr Mazen as strictly informal.

Mr Peres is understood to have agreed with Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, to delay the start of formal negotiations on the final status of West Bank territories and Jerusalem at least until June, due to the calling of an Israeli general election for May 29.



A policeman comforts a child outside Potgietersrus Primary School yesterday, where her father shouted at black pupils.



A mother and her children are allowed through the guarded gates of Potgietersrus school yesterday.

Police usher blacks into white school

FROM INTIGO GILMORE IN POTGIETERSRUS

AS A large black woman wearing a pink flowing gown swept through the huge iron gates of the former whites-only primary school, minutes after registering her ten-year-old son as a pupil, she could hardly contain her joy. "This is history," she cried.

A few yards along the pavement, grim-faced white parents looked on in defeat. Standing near the spot where about 200 men and women formed a blockade to prevent three small black children from entering the premises last month, some of the same parents offered only verbal resistance yesterday. "The

blacks running this country are arrogant," khaki-clad Ernie Yeates, 39, a burly toolmaker, protested.

The dispute over admission to the primary school, 150 miles north of Johannesburg, brought the first legal test of non-racialism enshrined in the constitution. On Wednesday, a Supreme Court judge, Tjibbe Spies, ordered that the school could not appeal against his decision.

Stories of heavily armed police backed by armoured vehicles and dogs, were deployed yesterday to guard 18 black children who were accompanied by their parents.

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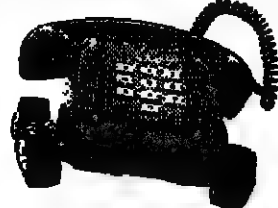
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Japan kept silent on HIV blood

Tokyo: Japanese bureaucratic secrecy has led to several hundred deaths of people who contracted Aids from HIV-infected blood products (Parrigine Hodson writes).

The negligence by the Ministry of Health and Welfare was revealed by the disclosure yesterday that in 1983 a blood-product manufacturer told the ministry that it had recalled products mixed with the blood of a donor with Aids-like symptoms. Nothing was done and the information was not made public. Most of the supplies were imported.

British hostages to be 'free soon'

Srinagar: Four Western hostages held by Al Faran guerrillas in Kashmir, two of them Britons, are alive and will be released soon, claimed an American congressman, who has helped free hostages across the world. "I see some hopeful signs," said Bill Richardson. "My plans are to continue working on this issue. I will be going to Pakistan this evening to talk to the authorities." The Britons have been held since July. (Reuters).

Sea quake kills four in Peru

Lima: Boats scoured the waters off northern Peru for victims of an undersea earthquake that killed at least four fishermen and caused a tidal wave alert on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. Waves up to 16ft high swept into Peru's port of Chimbote, burst through the walls of two fish-processing plants and flooded 50 homes. (AP).

Squeezed out

Lagos: Nigerian police have banned three men, clad in black and wearing masks like oranges to promote a soft drink, as a security risk after they caused a furore on the streets here. (AFP).

China hits at US over child abuse

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

PEKING yesterday accused Americans of being "totally indifferent" to the plight of children in their own country and painted a bleak picture of alleged abuse and exploitation in the United States.

Recent charges by the New

York-based Human Rights Watch/Asia of abuses in Chinese orphanages were both fabricated and exaggerated, the official Xinhua news agency reported. It was in America, said the agency, that cruelty to children, both physical and psychological, took place daily. It cited a 1994 report of nearly 120 mentally retarded

children who were allegedly fed radioactive food in a government-backed "experiment" by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Xinhua said that the number of child victims of violent crime in America had risen four times from 1985 to 1995, and that one in five schoolchildren carried a weapon.

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Republicans lead onslaught against Buchanan image

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PAT BUCHANAN'S free run ended abruptly yesterday as Colin Powell and other leading Republicans, the American media, and even foreign governments lashed out at his protectionism, isolationism and alleged racism.

Mr Buchanan did acquire one prominent endorsement, but it was one he could have done without. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the Russian ultranationalist, congratulated him on his victory in New Hampshire's primary, called him a "comrade and brother-in-arms in the struggle for national liberation," and suggested they could co-operate in deporting Jews from their two countries.

Robert Dole's campaign workers meanwhile pressed Steve Forbes and Senator Richard Lugar to quit the presidential race so their supporters could join Mr Dole's battle to stop Mr Buchanan.

The Dole camp also launched a whispering campaign against Lamar Alexander, the Senate leader's main rival for the mainstream Republican vote, saying his shady financial dealings as Tennessee Governor would prevent him attacking President Clinton over Whitewater.

The virulent attacks on Mr Buchanan reflected the conservative commentator's emergence as a serious contender for the nomination. General Powell damned Mr

Buchanan's "intolerance" and said he would not vote for him if he won the nomination. Rudolph Giuliani, New York's Republican Mayor, said: "We're going to do everything we can to stop Buchanan." Haley Barbour, the supposedly neutral party chairman, signalled hostility by saying he trusted Republican voters to make the right choice.

On the left, John Sweeney, America's trade union leader, said Mr Buchanan was no

Mr Buchanan is going to take a couple of days off... and then invade Poland

friend of the workers he claimed to represent. On the right, the American Conservative Union protested that his hostility to free trade, immigration and big business would damage the movement.

The Washington Post said Mr Buchanan was "a reckless and demagogic figure who has appeared on the national political stage in many years". The New York Times said he was "not flirting" but "dancing" with extremism. André

Quellet, Canada's Foreign Minister, deplored Mr Buchanan's "old-fashioned protectionism". Mexicans expressed concern. The Israeli media called him a fascist.

America's late-night television chat-show hosts had a field day. Mr Buchanan was "going to take a couple of days off after the New Hampshire primary, and then invade Poland", quipped David Letterman. The host Mr Buchanan was generating came "mostly from burning books and crosses", joked Jay Leno.

Mr Buchanan, who has now been granted Secret Service protection, is attracting huge crowds and considerable funds. He said his critics risked "the unity of the Republican Party" and told them to "calm down, relax, take it easy and don't say anything you might regret later on".

One Republican headache is how to kill off Mr Buchanan without driving away his substantial following among religious conservatives and the blue-collar workers, who will be the key to victory in November's general election.

Though no fan of Mr Buchanan, Rush Limbaugh, America's leading conservative talk-show host, issued a warning that his Republican critics were "not just insulting Buchanan" but also "a large percentage of people in their party who have always voted for them". The immediate



Pat Buchanan at a rally in front of the Mount Rushmore presidential monument

battle between Mr Dole and Mr Alexander may be settled within two weeks, and Dole aides are confident the cash-rich Senate leader will prevail. Mr Alexander portrays Mr

Dole as washed up and himself as the only viable mainstream Republican candidate, but to clinch that argument and trigger a mass defection of Dole supporters he needs to

win a crucial primary quickly. He will not win Delaware tomorrow or Arizona next Tuesday, meaning South Carolina tomorrow week will be his make-or-break state. He travels to California

Clinton basks in presidential role as rivals fall out

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE White House avoided any public show of private glee yesterday over Pat Buchanan's triumph in New Hampshire, which leaves a Republican Party at war and President Clinton well above the fray.

Senior aides believe the chasm among the President's opponents will deflect attention from the latest Whitewater revelations in which the White House has just handed over 100 pages of documents sought under subpoena since 1994.

"This country doesn't need another pundit. I'm not going to get involved in their business," said Mr Clinton. Privately, the President's advisers hope Mr Buchanan's success will result in a riven Republican convention this August and allow Democrats to paint his views as further evidence of extremism among their rivals. "If you liked what you saw in Houston in 1992, you're going to love what you see in San Diego in 1996," Christopher Dodd, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said in reference to the convention speech four years ago in which Mr Buchanan declared a religious and cultural war in America.

For the White House, at least, the strategy for the next few months is simple. As the three leading Republican candidates do battle for their nomination in a bloody whirlwind of primaries and caucuses, Mr Clinton plans to "take the Rose Garden on the road". He travels to California

today to tout his economic policies at the McDonnell Douglas aircraft plant and plans to welcome the advantages of foreign trade in opposition to the Buchanan view that Mr Clinton has sacrificed American jobs to overseas companies.

A programme of presidential trips throughout the country, particularly to the critical Golden State, aims to present Mr Clinton as a man of substance above the negative tone of the Republican campaign. This stage is expected to culminate in state visits to Russia and Japan before Mr Clinton formally announces his candidacy.

"Americans don't like politics these days," said Don Fowler, national chairman of the Democratic Party. "The longer he can be presidential and not political, the more they will like him. It is that simple."

High among Republican priorities will be Whitewater, the failed land venture in Arkansas which continues to blight the Clinton presidency. In the latest embarrassment for the White House, a series of documents said to have been "mistakenly overlooked" by Clinton aides were turned over to the Senate Whitewater committee on the night of the New Hampshire primary.

The White House continues its pattern of turning over evidence on weekends, late at night, and on important news days, said Senator Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the Senate panel.

No holds barred as feminist defends wrestling

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

BRAUN and brainpower combined in an unlikely alliance last night when Camille Paglia, the outspoken feminist, attacked an Ivy League university for its "scandalous" discrimination against male wrestlers.

Ms Paglia, an expert in verbal half-nelsons, accused Princeton University of surrendering to political correctness. The university has withdrawn recognition for its wrestling team and instead given official approval to a women's water polo team. Princeton took the step in order to meet sexual

equality requirements. But Ms Paglia insisted it was "vandalism". She had ridden into Princeton "like a Joan of Arc figure" (her words) to pepper it with her distinctive high-velocity rhetoric. Addressing a university debating society, she said the university's treatment of its wrestlers was "counter-productive and will create a backlash against feminism".

Since 1972 male sports at American universities have had to comply with sexual equality rules. Female athletes must be considered for admission on athletic prowess in the so-called "jack-pot" of college enrolment procedures, and sporting funds and medical

insurance must also be distributed fairly between the sexes.

Wrestling has been an official sport at Princeton since 1905 and the university has done well in inter-collegiate matches, winning the Ivy League championship 11 times. The captain of the team in 1958, William Fortenbaugh, later an Oxford athletics blue, leads a campaign to reinstate the sport, describing it as the perfect activity for sporty intellectuals. "Wrestling is inexpensive and it is quick. You get tired in 30 minutes and can then return to your studies," he said.

Critics of the decision have made wrestling "reminds" not only about

women's water polo (which Princeton describes as an "emerging" sport) but about some other female sports at the university. The women's ice hockey club reportedly faces a recruiting crisis because not enough tomboys can be found to hurl themselves into an activity that creates havoc with hairstyles and can create noses like Henry Cooper's.

An angry Ms Paglia, author of *Sex, Art and American Culture*, believes that the laws demanding sexual equality in sport can be compared to affirmative action — nobly intentioned but "it has become an iron-clad system and has been distorted".



Paglia: an expert in verbal half-nelsons


'Coma miracle' man talks after operation

New York's Gary Dockery, the "coma miracle" man who last week snipped out of a seven-year silence, has survived an operation that threatened to rob him of his newly recovered speech (Quentin Letts writes). After the operation to remove fluid from his lungs, Mr Dockery, 42, a Tennessee policeman, managed to speak a few words to doctors.

He was shot by a drunk in 1988 and lay in a semi-vegetative state until last

week, when he "awoke" and spoke almost non-stop for 18 hours. He then lapsed into silence and hospital staff in Chattanooga feared the operation might destroy his chances of speaking again.

Once the anaesthetic had worn off, Mr Dockery again spoke a few, halting words. Asked what time it was, he replied "night" and then "three o'clock". He was a little off the mark, as the clock in the room showed 12:45pm.



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Lady Hollis, heroine of new Labour, tells why divorced wives should get half the pension



Lady Hollis: "Divorce always hurts, but we make it more painful. The letters are heartrending"

Lady champion of the broken-hearted

Baroness Hollis of Heigham is one of the Labour Party's secret weapons. Tall, red-haired, chic and a PhD, educated at a state school and Cambridge, clearly new Labour fits her like a glove, but her roots were in the devout, salt-of-the-earth "old". Both her parents left school at 12, and strove to make their community a better place.

In the House of Lords it is obvious that she is popular, conciliatory and collaborative, a cross-party networker and team player. In the bar she is constantly greeted and buttonholed by peers of every persuasion.

Her amendment to the Family Law Bill, allowing pension funds to be shared in divorce settlements, will be debated next week. It has enthusiastic all-party support in the Lords, where she led the debate, aided by Tory Baronesses Young and O'Gorman.

It is simply reasoned in her rapid, breathless delivery. "Divorce always hurts. But we make the financial settlement more painful, by not allowing the couple to split what may be their biggest asset, the pension. So a loyal wife and mother may face an old age on income support."

"All we say is that the current value of the pension fund should be included in the matrimonial estate when it is assessed at the point of divorce."

"Most men would actually prefer to take a short-term asset, to get themselves a new home, than the long-term pension asset which they may never live to enjoy. It is not an obligation, only an option, and it benefits both the parties."

"The letters we've had are heart-rending," she says. "Like the woman who spent 30 years looking after two disabled children, until she was 'traded in for a younger model'. Her part-time earnings had gone into her husband's pension plan, none of which could be assigned to her on divorce: now she earns what she can, but she faces penury."

Patricia (née Wells) was born in the rural south Devon village of Down Thomas, where everyone's door was open. Her father was a farm worker, TGWU unionist and parish councillor who campaigned for a village hall and playing fields. Her mother ran the Wesleyan

Methodist chapel, where Patricia, the eldest of three, played the harmonium and sang in the village choir.

It was a traditional dissenting radical background. "But it wasn't at all sour, despite the Methodism and trade unionism and parish politics. It was generous and inclusive and open and optimistic."

From her grammar school, now a comprehensive, most pupils left at 15 to work on the land. Patricia was one of half a dozen who stayed on: she got to Girton College, Cambridge, where she took a first in history and won a Harkness fellowship.

"So I was in the United States when Martin Luther King had his dream. I marched with my American boy friend in the civil rights campaign. I spent my summer organising baked bean runs to Mississippi — by Jimmy Hoffa's Teamsters' Union, which was being prosecuted by Bobby Kennedy for corruption."

It was an early lesson in ideology versus pragmatism. She came home with a fiancé, Martin Hollis, another Harkness fellow destined for the Foreign Office and Balliol. After her doctorate, both found jobs at the new University of East Anglia, where she still teaches history on Fridays. Their two sons went to the local comprehensive (no Harman-like embarrassments here) and flourished: one went to Cambridge, one to Edinburgh.

Her husband, a tall, sandy-haired Wykehamist, nephew of Roger Hollis of MI5, is UEA's Professor of Philosophy, a Labour supporter, author of *Rationality and Relativism*, *The Cunning of Reason*, and so on. He lists "puzzles" as his recreation in *Who's Who*. When they were young and poor, he set about rewiring their house himself, declaring: "I know that electricity follows the laws of logic, and I know the laws of logic."

She exudes civic pride for Norwich — "It has more churches and

more council houses than any other city" — as a former leader of the city council. She joined the housing committee just in time to stop the slum clearance of Victorian houses; hence those Sandreux terraces, now a feature of Norwich's charm. They also rescued 30 medieval churches. Her mentor was her predecessor, Sir Arthur South, an old-style city leader of substance and vision.

Tony Crosland spotted her parliamentary potential and co-opted her into his advisory group, and she three times fought Tory Great Yarmouth for Labour in the 1970s. But later, the offer of a safe Midlands seat proved to be her glass ceiling.

"My children were 10 and 12," she says. "They would have been living in Norfolk. I would be at Westminster with a constituency in the Midlands. It wasn't fair on the family." And that, she thought, was goodbye West-

minster, until Neil Kinnock put her in the Lords in 1990.

When she first arrived in the Lords she recalls telling fellow peers about Alan Clark writing an essay, while at Eton, about a family in which "the mother was poor, the father was poor, the children were poor and the butler was poor". This story was greeted in silence; one peer said: "I know lots of families like that." She laughs.

But she loves the lordly camaraderie, including the hereditary peers who so often bring an expertise from chairing charities. "And because there is no braying, it's much easier for women's voices to be heard."

"The Commons may be more workmanlike and professional in terms of politics, but since we have no Speaker, there is a premium on the courtesies here. It sounds flowery at first, but you learn to decode it. And although I see that the Lords must be reformed, I hope it won't lose its particular flavour, which is deliberative and reflective."

The pensions debate was, I see from *Hansard*, full of eloquent

decorous exchanges, notable for their candour (Lord Pearson of Rannoch, currently involved in a divorce settlement, himself: "It seems obviously fair, fair beyond peradventure, that my wife should in future be able to share in my substantial pension fund...") and their wit (Earl Russell: "I can see no reason whatever why one party should suffer all the hardship. There is a case for some fairness even in hardship...").

When she can tear herself away from Westminster she sings (aloud) in the university choir ("henshishly concentrated; a way of wiping your mind clean of politics"), sails their "Noddy boat" (a 27ft motor cruiser) on the Norfolk Broads, and unwinds in domesticity: "I like the serenity of a place of peace. I like the warmth and support of a family. I loved those Sunday roasts with three generations of the family round the table."

Last year her husband was away teaching in North Carolina, and their eldest son, the jazz piano-playing Simon, is on a Fulbright scholarship in New York, so the family had a Christmas reunion in snowy Manhattan.

She also manages to write: her last book, *Ladies Elect*, was on Victorian women who organised school boards and workhouses — "more women were elected to office in 1900 than in 1980" — and her next will be on Jennie Lee. Appointed biographer by Michael Foot and Lord Goodman, she is fond of the subject but "Coming from the ILP she was a little too keen to divide the world into black and white for my tastes — suspicious of condescension and compromise."

Quite the reverse of Lady Hollis, who relishes working across party lines. It is not really surprising that she was credited with influencing Alan Howarth's decision to cross the floor — a canard put out by credulous Tories playing *cherchez la femme*.

She is entirely at home in Tony Blair's party, relishing her social security brief "because you can make a real difference to people's lives". "From where I come from, with parents who had to work at the age of 13, I see that it is the constituency of the Labour Party that has changed and adapted according to the times, not just the leadership."

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



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REOPENING OF
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Imran's new role isn't quite cricket

Why are we so fascinated by Imran Khan? Tunku Varadarajan unravels an Eastern enigma



Jemima and Imran Khan with their royal visitor

Arriving in Lahore by private jet, wrapped in local pink, a studiously demure Princess of Wales stepped out into the Eastern glare. The colour of her clothes was apt, for the Government of Benazir Bhutto is reported to be quite pink with rage — and our Foreign Office to be a brighter shade of that hue with embarrassment.

The jet in which the Princess flew to Pakistan belongs to Sir James Goldsmith, Britain's most famous father-in-law. The royal visitor is in this stately Punjab city to meet Sir James's daughter Jemima and her husband. The former, mercifully, is not called Haiga any more. The latter, lest you have forgotten, is called Imran.

Imran Khan. Is there a Pakistani better known to us than he? The Princess's visit

to Lahore, her dinner with him (sheep's brains and mildly spiced kebabs are what she ate), and her visit yesterday to his cancer hospital have helped the balding, retired cricketer to hit his favourite target — the middle-stump of our imagination.

But whence comes the British fascination with Imran? Is it merely because he is thought to be handsome? Is it Oxford? Is it cricket? Is it because he is an Easterner who, having slept his way

through several of "our" women, is now married to one? Whatever the answer, Imran Khan needs deconstructing. Kipling's wily Pathan, clearly, has travelled a long, long distance from his wily North-West ways.

The tale of Imran is, of course, more complex by far than the man. Imran himself is a bundle of self-righteous platitudes and ludicrous Pathan sentimentality. The tale has only partly to do with his 38 Test matches, many of

them played as a bossy captain. To the British, the interest lies in the following imagined sequence of cultural progression: Imran, "not one of us" (or so we thought), but is now apparently "not one of us" again — or so some of us think, none the wiser after having observed him for two decades.

He came as a young man to Britain, imbued the ways of a part of its society, grew to love its pleasures and to pursue them single-mindedly. In the circles in which he mixed, he was viewed indulgently: the British upper classes have always had a soft spot for dashing from the sub-continent. The taboos on interracial sex — so powerful in Kipling's time — had, by the time of Imran's emergence into Stringfellow's manhood, evolved into nothing more malign than the delicious aftertaste of forbidden fruit.

What saved Imran from being dismissed as a bounder, however, was his cricket. He played magnificently, cultivating an imperious on-field manner which gave his off-field persona that vital infusion of aristocracy. In time, of course, he came to believe the myths of his own making. His treatment of his team-mates was disdainful: he was the feudal *sirdar*, or lord, they his underlings.

Yet his esteem in Pakistan has always been measured in a different way. A leader of men, Imran has always struck with awe a population accustomed to the firm hand. In a land where victory on the cricket field is, mistakenly, believed to add to the country's good name, Imran was lionised as the man who put Pakistan truly on the map — no small accolade, for Pakistan has been on the

map for less than 50 years. If his hubris drove Imran to stirring deeds on the cricket field, it has caused him to succumb to his country's adulation. It has bestowed upon him a grandeur for which he is not equipped intellectually. His naive endorsements of political Islam, of the frankly primitive ways of many of his Pathan friends, and the richness of his criticism of "brown sahibs" and Western ways, betray immediately that the man is out of his depth.

Still, he has his cancer hospital, although it is not immediately clear why Pakistan needs such an institution more urgently than basic, countryside medical facilities. And he and Jemima have had the Princess of Wales to dinner. Not bad going, really, when one thinks about it. Perhaps, some of us have missed his point?

Is gambling in Britain really a dangerous game? Giles Coren reports

Sex in spades



Gambling, Hollywood style... in Britain the lure is likely to be the free soft drinks

A young man in a maroon baseball cap emblazoned with a golden horseshoe lumbers under the weight of a stack of poker chips which he has been constructing since 11 o'clock the previous evening. He hauls them up onto the counter, where a lugubrious old man in a dinner jacket counts them rapidly with white-gloved fingers.

The fingers reach into a drawer and count out a pile of banknotes, which the young man, a 27-year-old lawyer called Matt Bourne, folds into his back pocket. "Six hundred and fifty," he says, and purses his lips. "God, I love this place. What about you?"

I, as usual, have no chips left to exchange. I am scrambling in my wallet for a forgotten pound coin to plug into a fruit machine which might, if I strike the jackpot, make up the deficit of another night sacrificed on the altar of greed.

This is the fundamental human frailty on which Martin Scorsese's *Casino* (released today) has cashed in, continuing the century-old love affair between casinos and the cinema, but portraying drug dependence, divorce and death as inevitable corollaries of casino life.

Things are a little less grim at the Victoria in London's Edgware Road, one of the biggest of Britain's 120 casinos, where terribly nice young English people are spending more and more time, attracted by the free food and drink at the tables, the chance to play a role on a ready-made film set, and the timeless allure of money for nothing.

"It is nothing like America," says Matt, who began playing at the Vic after falling in love with cards at the 1992 World Series of Poker in Las Vegas. "There they play you with drink

until you are throwing your money at them in handfuls. In Britain you get free soft drinks and food, but drinking at the table is illegal."

This law is one of many, enshrined in the 1968 Gaming Act, which are designed to protect innocent Brits from the horrors of gambling. It is because of this Act that British casinos must close by 4am and abide by the notorious 48-hour rule — which forbids you from playing until you have been a member of a casino for at least two days — thus, theoretically, preventing passers-by from blowing their pay cheques on an impulse.

The protection sounds fair enough when you hear Robert De Niro, as a Mafia casino boss, say at the beginning of *Casino*: "We're the only winners. The players don't stand a chance." The cardinal rule, he says, is to "keep them playing, and keep them coming back. The longer they play the more they lose."

Ah, but those are the mugs who play crooked games," says Matt. "They have to beat the bank. At poker, I only have to beat you."

Others have a more devil-may-care approach. Oily is a tall, rangy Old Etonian with choirboy-blond hair who cares less about the losing than the taking part. "It is all so wonderfully tacky," he says. "I

used to go to Crocford and Aspinalls in Mayfair, and found them even more vulgar — but in a country where the pubs shut at 11 it is the only alternative to an Ecstasy-crazed rave in a muddy field."

Everyone here is passably well turned out. For gambling, in these days of lottery fever, must be dressed up to different

"The croupier pushes a stack of chips — and there you are, smoking and all glamorous"

iate itself from the cheap pursuit of hopeless wealth.

"It is part of the 1990s irony thing, like easy listening and board games," says Liz, a 24-year-old television researcher by day, slinky succubus of the gaming rooms by night. "It is nice to put on smart clothes and go to a silly place where people are playing with money."

The influence of the movies is not to be ignored. "There is that great scene in *Golden-*

eye," says Liz, "when Famke Janssen is up against James Bond. Her red lipstick and fantastic cleavage against his jawline and suave. It is pure sex. The woman invades his macho world, and takes him on on his own terms. The last time I saw a Bond film I was too young to go to a casino, but this time I thought straight there after the film."

"I love the macho environment. All these big fat men look at you like you don't have enough money to play with them, and they are probably right. It will cost you 25 or 50 quid for a couple of decent spins on the roulette wheel, but if you win, then you know."

"Girls are supposed to be deferent — we have to be paid for at dinner and if we earn more than our boyfriends then we are not supposed to mention it. I have to pretend to be shy all the time. So it's fun to swagger into a casino and jam 50 quid on a couple of numbers."

Among the female players, this sexual reversal seems to be crucial. Imogen, 27, a psychotherapist, explains: "Boys get to play at being aggressive all the time, so I like to play up to the plunging neckline image and take on some sweaty businessman. Your number comes up, or you make 21 at blackjack, the

croupier pushes a stack of chips in your direction, and there you are, smoking your cigarette and being all glamorous."

The air over the tables is barely breathable. "Gamblers smoke because they are short-term thinkers," says Eionian Oily. "You wouldn't gamble if you were someone who thought carefully about the future. You are not even thinking about next Tuesday. It is all about here and now, which is why young people like it. There is just you, your money, your face and your drink. It's a bit like life."

There are nods of concurrence around the craps table. "In a world of Aids, recession, of caution and precaution," agrees Matt, "it is important to shut yourself away in this hidden place, play out a fantasy life and forget the greyness of the world."

At about half past three Imogen asks someone the time. No one knows. There are no clocks in the Victoria. And there are none on any casino walls anywhere in the world. In America this is because they don't want you to look up and see that it is morning, and time to join your spouse by the pool. In England, with our puritan closing time, it is just another part of the game.

"It is one area where the Government doesn't try to protect us," says Matt. "They haven't made clocks compulsory yet." And everyone loses in their chips for a last, all-or-nothing spin of the wheel.

It's a small world in a gap year

THEY ARE everywhere, dressed in ragged shorts and a bewildering array of charm bracelets. Halfway up the High Atlas mountains, in the bar of a Bolivian brothel and on the remotest beaches of Thailand, 18-year-olds with names like Jemima and Fred are having their "gap year", as mandatory a part of the middle-class maturing process as violin lessons, braces and French exchanges.

No year between school and university is complete these days without at least six



months being spent helping with the harvest in Nicaragua or assisting Mother Teresa as she mops the brows of the sick and needy.

The more exotic the location, the more credibility

points are stored to be cashed in at the freshers' tea party. And, of course, your Peruvian mobiles look fantastic in your dingy halls of residence, while your tan is set off perfectly by your sky-blue Namibian linen.

In the 1960s, anyone with pretensions to sophistication did the hippy trail to Kathmandu. The point of such a journey was to have fun, take illegal substances and return with a goatee, an Afghan coat that stank in the rain and a host of incurable bowel infections.

In these career-orientated times, however, no one dares confess that a gap year is simply a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to find a place where beers cost only a few pence, to lie in the sun all day, to grow your first stubble and to return with scores of films showing your friends swaying bleary-eyed around a camp fire or mooning out of the back window of a bus halfway up the Andes.

On no, the whole point of a gap year, practitioners will earnestly assure you, is to help those less fortunate than oneself and in the process to become a better and wiser person.

Strangely, one seldom hears of 18-year-olds finding themselves by helping out in a home for battered wives in the suburbs of Leicester.

In the 18th and 19th centuries young gentlemen, and sometimes ladies, marked the transition from adulthood to adolescence with a Grand Tour, usually of Europe. The ostensible purpose of this journey was to introduce the

young to the finer features of Byzantine churches and Renaissance sculpture. However, in reality, says Dr Jeremy Black, the author of *The Grand Tour of the 18th Century*, the sons of the elite were being sent away to sow their wild oats in foreign obscurity.

"Young men of 18 or 19 had nothing to do in those days, when university was basically for aspiring clergymen," he says. "The Grand Tour was an ideal way of keeping them occupied for a year or so."

Cheap air travel means such activities are no longer the preserve of the aristocracy, but still the hedonistic spirit prevails.

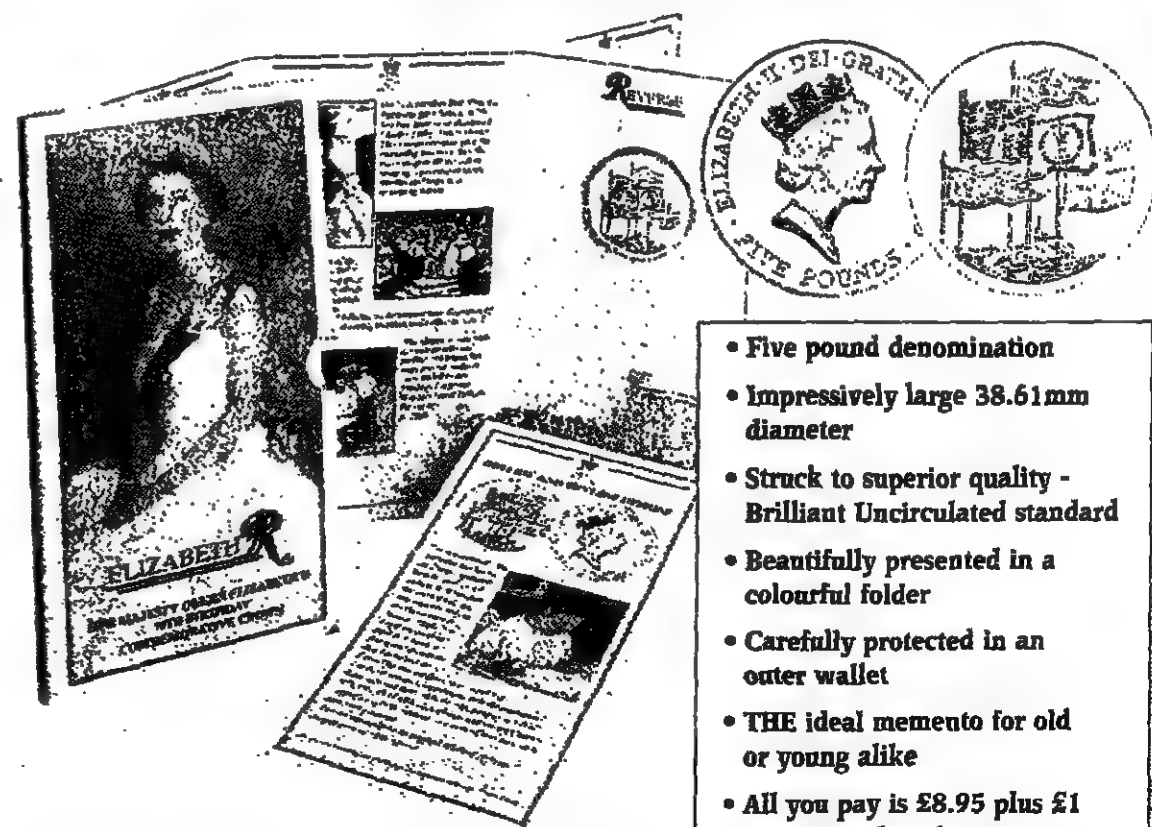
"I spent my gap year teaching in a school in India," recalls Michael Smith, 25. "It was very rewarding, but the best time I had was travelling with my friends, once term had finished, getting drunk every night and having an extended holiday at my parents' expense."

"I went to a kibbutz, supposedly to learn about a different way of life, but in fact all I wanted was to get away from England and sleep with lots of girls from all over the world," says Dominic Cleveland, 25.

John Patrick, a barrister who spent time before and after university in Zimbabwe, Turkey and Pakistan, says: "I went to these places to broaden my horizons and in some way improve my understanding of the world. But I only really found out what life was all about when I became a lawyer and started having to deal with children who had been abused and people who were going through bitter divorces."

"Most of my friends could tell you everything about Guatemala City," he adds, "but none of them has a clue what's going on in a council estate in Hull."

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Requests for application forms should be received no later than 11th March

Philip Howard



■ Scott Minor: could do better — but short measure is not your problem

ALL The reasons for the institution of this report on the Scott Report are that I have just knocked all six volumes off the mezzanine with my overcoat, almost poleaxing the news editor down below. Others have marked your essay for fairness, thoroughness, clarity and its consequences, with grades from alpha to gamma-7. This report will deal with its grammar and prose style. In the way that Old Chalky or Robert Birley used to scribble wounding comments in red ink in the margins of our juvenile essays.

A1.2 I question your trick of flagging paragraphs with letters and numbers, as I do here for illustration. This worked for Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, but irritates in less well-drilled arguments. Such labelling purports to lend an air of scientific precision to an otherwise rambling narrative.

A1.3 As a general matter of style, how have you managed to make a thrilling tale of sabre-toothed dictators, merchants of death, superguns and chicanery in high places as boring as Sainsbury's checkout bill?

A2.1 Was it necessary to bang on at a length to eat up Sherwood Forest? Editors and pedagogues seldom thank candidates who write more than they are asked for or on both sides of the paper at once.

B1.1 To turn to the minutiae of grammar: how many times have I told you, Scott, that in English the double negative is an absolute no-no? Yet you persist in constructing such sentences as: "I do not accept that he was not personally responsible." This takes the reader time to unscramble, and can end up giving the opposite meaning to that intended, as in: "There is no reason to doubt that what he said in his statement is not true." What was meant here was: "There is no reason to doubt that his statement is true."

B1.2 I suspect that your first draft used more positive statements, such as: "He was personally responsible." But after some sixth-formers had criticised your essay, you sought to tone it down with double negatives. First thoughts usually work better than such blurring by committee.

B1.3 Your proliferation of abstract nouns, capital letters such as MODWG and OQEL, and double passives like "The point is sought to be evaded" add a new horror to Report-speak. When you have finished with it, the English language looks as though it has been run over by a textbook on leishhold covenants.

B1.4 There is no need continually to write "in my opinion". Of course it is your opinion, otherwise it would not be in your essay, and your parents would not be paying large fees to have it corrected by me. You sound like a judge summing up with an eye on the verdict of Westminster.

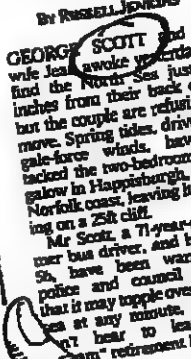
B1.5 There is too much padding. Why start successive paragraphs with, "Perhaps even more significantly," followed by, "Most interestingly, perhaps?" Perhaps me no perhapases. What you write is either significant and interesting, or not. Presumably the former, otherwise what is it doing in your essay? Death to all formulaic introductions — mere throat-clearing before you get down to business.

B1.6 You display a fourth-form exuberance for showing off with longer and inky terms. Why all these "nonwithstandings"? "Though" has one syllable instead of four and is also the word that most of us understand. They not-understand notwithstanding. "Whilst" is an archaism from the old-fashioned register of English once known as *Times Ponderoso*. "While" is the everyday word. "Whilst" is the word dressed up in full-bottomed wig. Off with its tail! Down with "utilise", up with "use".

ZZZ1.99 Such ambiguity is a virtue in poetry. But it is a fault in an essay such as yours to trip your readers so often and make them remount and take your sentences again. Unless, of course, you wanted to be ambiguous. But you forgot that your essay was to be read by the old pedant who has the misfortune to be your form master. At the very least, you should have hired Beetle or one of his ingenious chums in Remove to sub-edit and tighten it up. When all is said and done, you never are, now having read your essay, I have what Beetle would call a "terrible leadache". And I must take a couple of aspirates.

Peter Brookes
23 11 96

Couple refuse to go as house teeters on cliff



GEORGE SCOTT and his wife, Joan, have refused to leave their home on a cliff overlooking the North Sea, but six inches from their back door, but the couple are refusing to move. Spring tides, driven by gale-force winds, have attacked the two-bedroom bungalow in Happisburgh, on the Norfolk coast, leaving it teetering on a 25th cliff.

Mr Scott, a 71-year-old former bus driver, and his wife, Joan, have been warned by police and council officers that it may topple over into the sea at any minute, but they "don't want to leave their home", he says.

The Scotts determined to enjoy their sea view

"Scott ... couple refuse to go... House teeters... Now where've I seen that before?"

Come into the Garden

Opera is not elitist, but a fountain from which we can all drink — and there are plenty of cheap seats at Covent Garden

The day I wrote this column, I went to Covent Garden, to hear and see *Samson et Dalila* by Saint-Saëns, a work I have always loved, and my eyes gleamed when I remembered the Sidney Nolan settings, and the stunning end. *Samson* has one of the most familiar and beautiful songs in all music. "Softly awakes my heart". (I love to see the newcomers to the work when, with a start, they hear the jewel they know and discover that it comes from the very work they are hearing. I love any opera more when my companion has never heard the work on offer, because I am introducing her to beauty that I am familiar with, and I now can share that beauty.)

We sat in the orchestra stalls, I always do, because I have poor sight and because I like to be near the stage. Each of the seats cost me £120. I am able to pay such prices. Very many people — I should think almost all — cannot. And I forgot, the programme-book, and a thick book it is, costs £3 (though you may take solace in the slip which is given out for nothing, with all the necessary details). No wonder that Covent Garden rarely has more than 17 people in it, most of whom are under the belief that they are in Drury Lane, seeing *Miss Saigon*.

But let us scrutinise more closely the Covent Garden tickets and their terrible prices — prices so terrible that only a multimillionaire like me can afford them, while tens of thousands of opera-lovers can only stand outside the building with the pigeons.

My £120 tickets were the highest in the house on that night. Those were the very best, but then the next rung down was £98. The next was £88. The next, £82. The next, £68. The next, £56. The next, £42. The next, £38. The next, £22. Those who are willing to take seats which have a somewhat restricted view (in Bayreuth there are seats from which you cannot see anything of the stage — Covent Garden isn't that bad), can go for a fiver. And you can stand for a tenner.

Oh, no, I haven't finished yet. Not nearly finished. For I was glowing in the beauty of *Samson*, but if you were wanting tickets for other operas, every one of these prices would have been substantially cheaper, and if you love the ballet (as alas, I do not) you could

actually be asking for tickets at the highest ballet price, snug and warm in the knowledge that those were a quarter of the opera's highest. Now tell me who it was that said that only the rich can go to Covent Garden, and I will spit in his eye.

At that point our dear colleague *The Sun* takes a hand. *The Sun*, you must understand, has its own idea of culture, and that idea does not stretch to opera. Indeed, if our dear colleague ever has its way, there will be no opera in the land, and shortly afterwards there won't be any concerts either. Here is a headline from our dear colleague: "The Sun stops £50m lotto handout to opera — delight as tiff scheme is Kod". At much the same time, the proposed Cardiff Bay Opera House (Wales is always complaining — rightly — that all the great projects go to London) has been cancelled, no doubt to the pleasure of our dear colleague *The Sun*.

Now I do not believe in conspiracies: our dear colleague *The Sun* did not dig tunnels and crawl through the land whispering "Down with opera". But all of a sudden, the word has been transmogrified into something so shocking that when they hear it, stern mothers feel obliged to tell their offspring to go and wash their mouths out.

There is, I regret to say, a body of people — not necessarily ignorant of the arts and particularly music — who rejoice every time the gloomy Covent Garden financial figures are announced. What is more, within the body of people I describe, there are genuine opera-lovers who would love to see Covent Garden go down the hole, never to reappear. Absurd as it may seem, I have come to the conclusion that Rodney Milnes is right when he claims — and it

is a terrifying thought — that a wholly artificial class war has been declared — artificial in that it cloaks a violent anti-arts movement that has spread upwards from the rabidots to infect even the "quality" press.

And, of course, Covent Garden is the biggest and most gleaming target. Can you believe that there are people who actually hate Covent Garden? These are not music-haters, they are only Covent Garden-haters, and they hate it because it is beautiful and rich in glory and sounds that can come only from God.

So if it isn't the money, what is it? Well, anyone who puts a foot inside Covent Garden can see that the toffs with their millions and their dinner-jackets are a figment of the most ludicrous kind, and that they should be made to wear the Shirt of Nessus for 99 years.

For I believe that there is a tide coming in, a tide of opinion that would sneer at the very foundations of something like Covent Garden. What do you think it means when that creepy-crawly Gummer has to find a site for Covent Garden while it is being rebuilt, and he refuses the most obvious one — the Tower Bridge site, when Southwark council itself is happy to have it? Hark to the Southwark council leader:

I am very saddened and deeply concerned by this decision. We felt this prestigious development was appropriate for this part of the borough and would have made a positive contribution to the lives of the people of Southwark.

Jeremy Isaacs, throughout his turbulent reign as general director of the Royal Opera House, has had to fight countless dragons, not least, of course, the Dragon Money. He will feel a thousand tons lighter when he steps down, but of course the weight is nothing: to ride that bucking horse is

nothing; what he will remember are the glorious sounds he heard and sights of beauty he saw.

But it is not only Jeremy Isaacs. I do not believe that anyone with any true feeling can walk into that wonderful building and not think that the world is a splendid place. I go very frequently to Covent Garden (and hardly less frequently to its younger brother, the ENO). What we feel when the curtain goes up is not just pleasure, but one of the bulwarks that hold up the world. An extravagant metaphor, you say? No, because art is not just something to give pleasure, though it certainly is that, but because the world could not go on without it, and that has been true since those pictures were drawn on the wall at Lascaux that turned out to be more than 15,000 years old, and which were discovered quite by accident: all those millennia later.

And if you put music on the stage and marry these two wonderful arts, there will be no sheering and jeering, except by fools and brutes.

When you think of it, there are people who have no art in their lives — an almost incredible situation to me. But there are people who are in a yet greater fork: they reject art. True, it is now very rare — though it was very frequent in my boyhood — for men and women to say such things as "Oh, I wouldn't dare to go into Covent Garden's but then damnit, only a year or two ago, I found an elderly lady hovering about the doors of Fortnum and Mason, who finally asked me: "Can anybody go in there?"

Come on, Jeremy, you have been bruised enough to be sufficiently toughened. And don't forget that when the new Covent Garden rises from the ashes, it will have a new leader. But for now, that building of yours is not just a place where opera and ballet are performed. It is a fountain from which we can all drink (remember, there are lots of cheap seats at Covent Garden), and if you promise not to tell, I will reveal what is the most remarkable fact about that Opera House: it is that the very best acoustics are by no means to be heard in the stalls — the most expensive seats — but in the amphitheatre, where the seats cost only a quarter of what they ask for the most expensive ones.

Why Boris is still our man

Robert Skidelsky on the fragile success of Yeltsin's Russia

Will Russia become a "normal" nation-state, or will it lurch back towards communism? There are three possible views: pessimistic, optimistic, realistic.

The pessimistic view was put trenchantly by Peter Reddaway in *The Times* of January 23. The West, he said, should "stop taking sides" in Russia's internal politics, recognise that the economic reforms have failed, and "prepare seriously for dealing with a Russia run increasingly by Communists and nationalists". This, Reddaway implies, will be necessary whoever wins in June's presidential election.

A resumption of the Cold War would mean cancelling economic aid, coupled with an eastward expansion of Nato as quickly as possible, to "secure" Central and Eastern Europe while Russia remains weak. Such a policy would mark a colossal defeat for the larger hopes which accompanied the collapse of communism. But still there would be sizeable gains to the West — the recovery of the "lost lands" and the confinement of Russia to a semi-Asiatic ghetto.

The optimistic view is that the reforms launched in 1992 are irreversible, and that Yeltsin's Communist challenger, Gennadi Zyuganov, is a sheep in wolf's clothing. Anatole Kaletsky argued in *The Times* of February 20 that the Communists might be more effective reformers than the reformists themselves, because they would put an end to disorder and corruption. The pessimists and optimists share one conclusion: the West should not take sides, since nothing much turns on the election.

The realistic view is that a great deal turns on who becomes the next Russian President. The reforms have not failed, but neither are they irreversible. Russia's inflation rate — the main relevant measure of stability — has fallen steadily from 1,354 per cent in 1992, to 140 per cent in 1995, and is expected to fall to 40 per cent in 1997. The economy is expected to grow by 2 per cent this year and 4 per cent in 1997. About 60 per cent of output is now produced by the private sector. The legal basis of a capitalist economy is being painfully built. It is not a brilliant record, but far from one of failure.

The very fact that Yeltsin has to put himself forward for re-election is another proof that Russia is today a genuine, if fragile, democracy, with a multiparty system representing all major interests, and a remarkably free press. To argue that all this can be put into reverse is not to say that the Communists intend to renationalise the whole economy or scrap democracy. But to claim that the Communists can be trusted to carry out the reforms more effectively than Yeltsin because they stand for "law and order", which Kaletsky interprets in a Western sense, is myopic. If the momentum of reform falters, the Communists will have an excuse to reverse much of what has been achieved. Kaletsky ignores the Communists' economic programme. Its centrepiece is to restore the primacy of the old heavy industrial sector and protect Russia's natural resources from "foreigners" and "speculators". Such a programme implies an attempt to remilitarise much of the economy, which would be catastrophic for Russian democracy.

To avert this possibility, it is important to have a reformer in the Kremlin. Yeltsin's reforming credentials are not impeccable, but over five years he has always returned to the charge, sidestepping opposition and gradually fashioning the necessary instruments of power and control. And despite blunders such as Chechnya, he has, on the whole, ruled constitutionally.

None of this means that the West should bank on a Yeltsin victory: his health is so uncertain that he may not even make it to polling day. But it should support him discreetly. The International Monetary Fund's subsidy of the Russian Government, now reduced to \$300 million a month, is a modest investment in continuing stability.

Much more important is for Western leaders to resist the clamour to expand Nato eastwards. Nothing could be more calculated to weaken the position of every democrat in Russia, and play into the hands of those itching to remilitarise the economy. No Russian can understand why we still need such a formidable military machine now the Cold War is over, still less why we seem intent on extending it to Russia's borders.

The idea that the West should have a free hand to reorder the security system of Eastern Europe regardless of Russia's view is both dangerous and historically ignorant: dangerous because Russia will not remain weak for ever; ignorant because no European security system can survive very long without being acceptable to those whose interests are most involved. At its best, the classic European balance of power entailed negotiation, not unilateral action, and this, not the obsolete thinking of the Cold War era, should be the guide to the construction of a new European security system.

Russia is bound to go on doing things we dislike, being more truculent than we want, and claiming exaggerated status and consideration. None of this means it is on the road back to communism. But our larger self-interest is to secure a free, prosperous and peaceful world: it is much too early to write Russia out of that script.

A Social Market Foundation conference on investment in Russia will be held at the European Bank on March 8.

Ear apparent

THE PRINCE of Wales has been rapped over the knuckles for exposing his ears. He stands accused of neglecting the most famous lugholes in the land and the British Safety Council is making an example of him in a nationwide advertising campaign.

The council is appalled by a recent photograph in *The Times* which showed the Prince without ear-protectors on a shoot with

Prince Harry. His son gets full marks for sporting protectors but the Prince is seen flinching at the sound of Harry's gun.

More than 100,000 copies of the poster featuring the royal ears, which are commonly compared to the handles of the FA Cup, will be distributed to factories and businesses across Britain to encourage people to protect their hearing.

"I saw the original photograph and I thought that it's a very bad advert at a time when we are concerned about the problems of noise," says James Iye, director-general of the council. "The Prince acted pretty stupidly. Being deaf is a terrible thing — so look after your hearing. And that applies to everyone, including the royals."

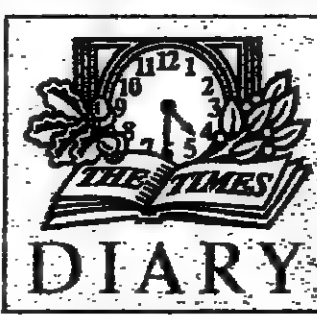
Royalists have rallied to the Prince's defence. "I think it is wrong," says Robin Scott, editor of *Sporting Gun* magazine. "The council would have had more success if it had said ear-protectors were possibly the best defence against a nagging wife."

● Good news for young blades came during the Oxford debate on Wednesday evening on Pride and Prejudice. Colin Firth, who played Mr Darcy in the BBC adaptation, is far less glamorous than his

screen persona. "He had to lose a lot of weight for the part and dye his light-brown hair dark," says the director, Simon Langton. "He doesn't look like Darcy in real life. He says that he is not even recognised in the pub."

Hats off

LORD WADDINGTON, the Governor of Bermuda, has decided to lay down his preposterous plumed helmet. Despite the luxurious colonial trappings he enjoys on a tax-free salary of some £75,000 a year, he has informed



the British Government that he wishes to return to Blighty early next year.

"I was asked what I would like to do," says the 66-year-old former Home Secretary. "And for family reasons I would like to bow out in the first part of 1997."

Waddington's tenure in Bermuda, which began in 1992, has hardly been onerous given its meagre population of 60,000. When Earl De La Warr was offered the post in 1941, he turned it down, complaining: "It's no bigger than Bodilly."

Jack the lad

IT'S A SHAME that the Princess of Wales is on a private visit to Pakistan, rather than on an official tour. She would otherwise have encountered Christopher MacRae, the British High Commissioner who lives in Islamabad. MacRae, an athletic chap with a

sense of humour as dry as the Thar Desert, would have regaled her with his latest interest — his ancestors. He has recently been to the capital of Baluchistan, on the trail of his grandfather's cousin, Jack.

"Jack was a colourful eye-surgeon who, in the early years of this century, cut down a local who had gone berserk and committed several murders," MacRae has been telling friends. "He then stitched him up again — so that he could stand trial and be hanged."

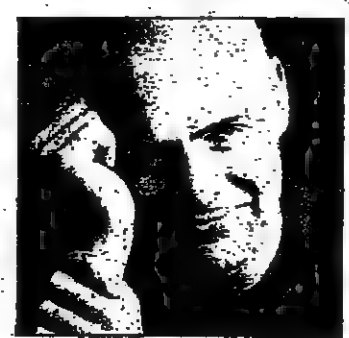
Glossy Tone

NEW LABOUR is going glossy — a magazine as shiny as Tony Blair's smile will soon be available to party members. *Labour Party News*, which is circulated to party activists, is to be replaced by *New Labour*. *New Britain*. Next week, the National Executive Committee will fine-tune the details of the publication.

"It will be much glossier and aimed at the whole membership of the party, not just activists," raves a surly spokeswoman. "We hope it will look like a Sunday supplement magazine," she says.

Body politic

HE WAS depicted as the villain of the piece in the BBC2's cult docu-



Keith Cooper: cult figure

mentary series *The House*. But nothing could have prepared Keith Cooper, director of corporate affairs at the Royal Opera House, for the reaction elicited by the programme from certain quarters.

It is reported in this week's *Spectator* by no less an authority than Jeremy Isaacs, general director of the opera-house, that ladies are forever swooning over his man.

"A solemn, French countess, I offered a substantial sum for the body of Keith Cooper," writes Isaacs.

Cooper is modestly itself. "It's extraordinary," he says. "But if I am going to give my body, I should benefit from the proceeds, not the opera house."



Prince of Wales: royal example



ISLAM AT SCHOOL

Christians respect other faiths by strengthening their own

Squabbles among religious denominations stunted the growth of England's education system in the last century. Squabbles over the proper place for our established religious traditions could equally blight the development of Britain's schools in the next. The withdrawal of Muslim children from religious education in Batley and Birmingham is an unhappy commentary on multi-faith teaching and a challenge to the future of our multicultural society.

The 1988 Education Reform Act instructed schools to cater for the "moral, spiritual and cultural welfare" of their pupils. Schools are under a legal responsibility to provide religious education which reflects the UK's Christian traditions. It is a responsibility many discharge poorly. If at all. Last June Dr Nick Tate, the Government's main adviser on the curriculum, gave warning that Britain was "far advanced towards becoming a religiously illiterate society". RE is too often reduced to a relativist canter through the world's faiths in which Stone Age superstition merits the same reverence as the faith which underpins our civilisation. In a recent survey half of those between 16 and 24 did not know what Lent was.

And yet while the young are ignorant of the 40-day fast, they are more spiritually hungry than ever. It is interest in rapid New Age banalities and enthusiasm for cults and sects which absorb school-leavers. The credulity which hopes to find in the earth mother the spiritual satisfaction that our finest thinkers found in the Holy Father is a sad consequence of RE teaching.

Islamic families are already ill at ease with the predominant secular liberalism of the West which declines to defend absolute values. It is understandable then that as Muslims they should wish to withdraw their children from RE lessons which cheapen all faiths by valuing none. And it is unsurprising that the strongest support for the Muslim militants should come from Chris-

tians who see their own faith cheapened by relativist religious education.

Religious education from an Islamic perspective might have much to recommend it. Islam is, at its best, an intellectual religion with a rich cultural heritage. It inculcates admirable moral virtues such as self-discipline and a proper concern for the poor. A wider appreciation of the nobler strains in Islamic thinking might improve Christians' own understanding of their traditions.

But in granting Islam its proper place, and conceding some of its claims, it would be wrong not to recognise that the United Kingdom is still a nation built on Judeo-Christian foundations. From Milton to Eliot, the glories of our culture are rooted in the two Testaments and our durable morality is sustained by the spiritual insights of Jesus.

Muslim nations expect compliance with their customs by those of other faiths. It is Britain's boast that religious liberty has been guaranteed since 1688. That liberty was preserved, however, by a people confident in their Christian traditions. More confidence now in upholding them would command greater respect from those of other faiths than agonised abdication.

It may be acceptable to allow separate RE for Muslim children. But the State should be wary of moving from there to funding separate Muslim schools. Segregated Muslim education would delight Islamic fundamentalists and do little to advance racial harmony. There is already evidence that the values Muslim parents wish to see instilled in schools are already being transmitted by those establishments most self-confident in their Christian faith. The Muslim parents of Maida Vale found their children's welfare was best guaranteed in the rigorously Catholic classrooms of Philip Lawrence's school. The greatest compliment a still-predominantly Christian Britain can pay citizens who cleave to other faiths is not to neglect its own inheritance.

EUROMYTHS THREE

Interests and illusions in European foreign policy

In Turin a month from now, heads of state will launch the European Union's latest inter-governmental conference. To what end? At Madrid last December, the best answer was that it would "bring the EU into line with today's realities and tomorrow's requirements". This wondrous bit of drafting saved politicians from admitting that they cannot agree what these "realities" and "requirements" are.

Such chopped logic is squarely in the tradition of the most tenacious of Euro-myths: first create an institutional framework, and automatically there follows the requisite political will. At the conference, this myth will be abused in support of a tighter common EU foreign and security policy. The argument goes like this. Europe will never count for anything in the world until the EU acts as one. It will act as one only if all its members accept give and take to arrive at common policies. To this end, they need a body to manage common foreign policies and a "European defence identity".

The first problem with this reasoning is that it stands history on its head. Alliances form where vital interests coincide — and not the other way round. They dissolve without the glue of common interest. The reason is simple. Foreign and security policies are fundamental expressions of national interest, not to be compromised unless compromise furthers that national interest. Each decision has to be taken on merit.

The argument that "Europe" would carry more weight by pooling sovereignty is equally subject to the test of pragmatism. It can be valid only when working together is more effective than preserving national freedom of action. Over former Yugoslavia, the problem was not the lack of a common foreign policy apparatus but the deep disagreements about what to do. Equally, many EU governments opposed military action to drive Iraq out of Kuwait; it is ludicrous to imagine that Britain or France would there-

fore have declined to commit their troops. Germany's official answer to this is more majority voting; its unofficial answer is that Germany and France would drive the common foreign policy machine. In either case, bitter divisions would ensue, making Europe less, not more, stable and respected. France proposes that there should be an EU "secretary-general for foreign policy", appointed by the Council of Ministers, "to give Europe a face and a voice". This would certainly give Washington what it has long wanted — a "single telephone number for Europe". Richard Holbrooke complained this month that during the latest confrontation between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean, "the Europeans were literally sleeping through the night". But a wake-up call to Brussels which revealed only that "Europe" was still thinking out its position would merely add to US exasperation.

Today John Major steps into the minefield of Europe's "defence identity" in a speech to the Western European Union. If the EU is serious, it has first to decide who will pay and how much. Even France is now slashing its defence budget. Unless a common defence policy enhances Nato's already proven capacity to project power jointly, it will hardly make Europe more stable.

EU governments can and should co-operate more closely. But the best way to do so is for governments that are ready to exert leadership on a particular issue to look more actively for allies. A case in point is Bosnia last summer where, however late in the day, Franco-British pressure galvanised America into setting up the Holbrooke mission. The key decision, however, was to send in armour and artillery — a risky course of action that would never have been decided by, or left to, an EU committee however skilfully it was constituted. So long as the interests of the EU's 15, or 25 future, members diverge, the most likely result of a prior commitment to act in common would be paralysis.

LAND OF EAGLES

Albania is a growing country — and grateful too

Seldom can a visit so short have produced a welcome so effusive. Malcolm Rifkind touched down in Tirana on Wednesday on his way home from Greece, and President Berisha was delighted. "I would like to thank the British taxpayers for all the help they have given to my country." In turn Mr Rifkind was able to announce the appointment of the first British Ambassador to serve in Albania. Yesterday a happy Albanian Finance Minister — surely one of the world's more thankless appointments — was able to state that the Bank of England is finally, after a delay of 50 years, to return 1.5 tonnes of gold to the impoverished state treasury.

Cut off by 45 communist years, Albania has bounced back into the world. There is little that its people can do about the 700,000 concrete bunkers scarifying their land, but they can at last celebrate their democracy, their increasing normality and their Muslim religion — as they have been doing in force to mark the end of Ramadan. Next month they go to the polls. President Berisha's Democracy Party faces a strong challenge, but he himself, a smiling heart surgeon, remains popular. An 8 per cent growth rate may be easy, in a country that five years ago had no private cars and only 40 lorries. But

it is a growth that has made this Land of Eagles live up, at least partly, to its name. Albanians boast a wild and glorious history: Skanderbeg, their 15th-century hero, held out against 13 Turkish invasions and became the toast of medieval Christendom. Later, forcibly converted, Albanians served as janissaries to the Ottoman sultan and monarchs in his Egyptian provinces. Albanians have produced figures as craggy and idiosyncratic as their unique language from Enver Hoxha at one extreme to Mother Teresa at the other, with the bizarre King Zog adding a touch of unreality.

Nowadays, this country of only 3.3 million, off the tourist track and as poor as the Gambia, is often overlooked. It should not be: it has played a restrained and responsible role in not inflaming its ethnic cousins in Kosovo; it has sought to learn the ways of the West with an innocent enthusiasm that has heartened international lenders; and it has shown that a little know-how assistance, sensibly applied, can bring enormous changes. The world may miss the once raucous propaganda from Radio Tirana, now thankfully silent. Instead, it has the gentle thanks from one of the few leaders ready to acknowledge outside generosity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Lyell's decision 'an abdication of the duties of his office'

From Lord Hutchinson, QC

Sir, Lord Alexander of Wealdon, QC, writing in praise of the role of the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, in the Matrix Churchill case ("Give Lyell a fair trial", February 20), states that "it was well understood that the minister had to identify and advance to the court the public interest in the document being withheld. The court then had to balance that against the advantages of disclosure in the individual case. That is exactly what Lyell advised and what happened".

I refer Lord Alexander to the Scott report. At G13.58 is set out the DTI's solicitor's note of a meeting held by Michael Heseltine with the officials. It reads:

"The President [of the Board of Trade] expressed serious concern at the overall basis of the prosecution. The papers he had seen suggested that Departments had been well aware of the intended military use of the goods yet the defendants seemed to be being prosecuted for concealing that from the DTI."

The President goes on to say that if the judge allowed disclosure "it would look as though he had been engaged in an attempted cover-up".

The Attorney-General's legal secretary conveyed the President's view to the Attorney ("He thinks it to be in the public interest for the document to be disclosed"). She included her whole file, and wanted the Attorney that "the prosecution may yet come to a sticky end" (G13.64).

Four days later Sir Nicholas, without reading any of the documents, nonetheless told the President that in law it was his duty to claim immunity for the documents on grounds of the public interest, "whatever his personal views" (G13.65).

Michael Heseltine signed a PII under protest and only on the understanding that the Attorney would see that the judge's attention was drawn to his views. He expressed his own views in a letter to Sir Nicholas. This letter, to Scott's "astonishment", was left unread until after the trial (G13.70).

Prosecuting counsel was not told of the President's view, nor of his letter, and neither was the judge. Counsel was instructed by Customs and Excise solicitors to resist disclosure and submitted that the documents were irrelevant to the defence. He told the judge that the President's attitude

was no different from that of the ministers who had agreed other certificates.

Sir Richard Scott comments on the absurdity of the notion that a minister who believes justice requires the documents to be disclosed is nonetheless obliged to recommend to the court that they be not disclosed. I have no hesitation in rejecting it (G13.113).

The case against the Attorney-General surely is that he abdicated the duties of his office. He has the superintendence of all prosecutions: he is given the power to initiate or stop any prosecution; he is head of the Bar of England; he is — as Lord Shrovecross put it in a statement in the Commons in 1951 — "the protector of the public interest".

While insisting on the President's duty to claim immunity in relation to documents essential to the defence, Sir Nicholas was happy to allow another minister, Kenneth Clarke as Home Secretary, to waive protection and exercise his discretion to disclose Secret Intelligence Service operations and procedures on behalf of the Crown when the latter wished to call an SIS contact of one of the defendants (G13.101). No balancing act on judicial decision there!

Scott found that "this was a prosecution which never should have been commenced" (G11). It was the Attorney-General who could and should have stopped it.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY HUTCHINSON,
House of Lords,
February 20.

From Mr Martin Thomas, QC

Sir, The question the Attorney-General has to answer is why public interest immunity certificates were used in the Matrix Churchill case at all.

The first criminal proceedings in which PII certificates were ever used were *Ex parte Osman* in 1990 (letter, February 21) concerning extradition to Hong Kong. In that case, the court refused my application to read the documents for which immunity was claimed.

In a subsequent hearing, in February 1992, counsel for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, despite the suggestion of the presiding judge, Lord Woolf, refused to release for in-

spection by the judges the documents subject to a PII certificate claim. This was said to be "on principle" — although the Hong Kong Government did accede to the court's request and their documents were indeed inspected by the judges, who decided, no doubt for good reason, not to disclose them to me.

The Attorney-General could have instructed counsel in Matrix Churchill to withhold the documents as "sensitive material" under the Attorney's guidelines of 1982: these are standard procedures customarily used to protect sensitive information in the hands of the authorities. All courts and counsel are familiar with them.

But in June 1992, the Court of Appeal in the *Judith Ward* case (Law Report, June 8, 1992) ruled for the first time, that documents withheld under the guidelines should be disclosed to the trial judge and that he, and not prosecuting counsel, should decide whether the defence should see them.

This was the background when Treasury counsel, who had appeared for the FCO in *Ex parte Osman*, advised the Attorney on September 3, 1992, that it was appropriate for ministers to sign PII certificates in Matrix Churchill.

Ministers were led to suggest that death — or, in *Tristan Garel-Jones* by now famous phrase, "unquantifiable damage" — would happen if the defence got hold of the documents. As Scott rightly states, never before had a PII certificate been employed in a criminal trial before a judge and jury in Britain.

Did it cross the Attorney's mind that the prosecution might have the option "on principle" to withhold these documents in the trial? Or that the trial judge might be so impressed by the threats that the heavens would fall, as not to inspect them? Or that he might be less ready to release them to defence counsel than documents withheld under the guidelines and therefore subject to the new Ward principles of inspection and disclosure?

Thank goodness Judge Smedley had the guts not to fall for it.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN THOMAS,
1 Dr Johnson's Buildings,
Temple, EC4,
February 22.

The Thames stairs — what a drama

From Mr Rodney Bewes

Sir, The stairs and steps which once gave access to the Thames, and which the London Rivers Association now plans to rebuild (News in brief, February 14), were once of great importance to the theatrical profession.

The ferryman and wherryman brought the public across the river to the theatres, and Thomas Doggett, actor-manager of Drury Lane, started his famous race in 1716 (still raced today) to thank the watermen for bringing his audience to him, as well as in praise of the royal house of Hanover.

There must be over 50 sets of stairs between Chiswick Steps, halfway up the Boat Race course, and the Thames Barrier. If I were to row from Putney to Charing Cross Pier, a few steps from the stage door of the theatre where I work, I would pass Red House Stairs at Battersea and Yorkshire Grey Stairs at Chelsea. Ahead would lie Old Bull Wharf Stairs at the Temple, Stew Lane Stairs after Puddle Dock, Old Swan Stairs by London Bridge, and Fountain Stairs on the south bank at Bermondsey.

On the north bank, after Tower Bridge, come Union Stairs, Wapping Old and Wapping New Stairs, King's Pelican and New Crane Stairs at Shadwell, and Coal and Bell Wharf Stairs at the beginning of the Limehouse Reach. On the opposite bank are Globe Stairs, Shepherd and Dog Stairs, Cuckold's Point Stairs and Gardens Stairs by Greenwich Pier.

And that's just a few!

Yours sincerely,
RODNEY BEWES (Freeman,
Company of Watermen and
Lightermen of the River Thames),
c/o Playhouse Theatre,
By Arundel Stairs,
Embankment, WC2,
February 20.

Hereditary peers

From Mr Richard Berkeley Matthews

Sir, In the debate in your columns over the future of the House of Lords (letters, February 9, 13, 16), nobody has acknowledged the advantage produced by the presence of the hereditary principle — the random selection of very much younger members than could ever be made by election or appointment. Shame on the elected house that in January 1995 it fell to the then 24-year-old Lord Freyberg to sort out the position of pension-dependent war-widows.

Yours faithfully,
R. BERKELEY-MATTHEWS,
As from: 35 York Mansions,
Prince of Wales Drive, SW11.

College loyalties

From Mr Nigel L. Denton

Sir, Oxford University's Commission of Inquiry is, of course, quite right to resist pressure to reform the college system (report, February 19). My own loyalty is entirely to my own college, New College. I still retain many friendships from my undergraduate days there. Although I read mathematics, lasting friendships were formed with contemporaries reading classics, English or history.

In the chapel of New College there is, perhaps, the clearest indication that the college never rejects its own as there is a war memorial to German members of the college who were killed in the Great War: "In memory of the men of this college who coming from a foreign land entered into the inheritance of this place & returning, fought and died for their country 1914-1919."

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL L. DENTON,
12 Maria Court,
Southgate Road, Reading, Berkshire.

Uncivil comment

From Ms Jeanie Fenwick Elliott

Sir, The contention made by Professor Alec Broers (report, February 21) that engineers are dull and need to "get themselves a life" receives support from another quarter. As pointed out in your columns in June 1994, the entry under "Boring" in the London Central Yellow Pages reads simply: "See: Civil Engineers".

Yours faithfully,
J. E. F. ELLIOTT,
26 Pembridge Villas, W11,
February 21.

Home and away

From Mr Norman McCandlish

Sir, In the new era of professionalism, it's time for the Rugby Football Union to find a new anthem for their team.

It is arrogant to appropriate the anthem of the United Kingdom to England alone. It causes much unseemly booting when played at away matches, which can only add to the weight of alienation and rejection felt by Jack Rowell, the manager, and his lads as they prepare to face their opponents.

An appropriate anthem shouldn't be difficult to find. Perhaps Ted Hughes could be persuaded to fit words to *The Archers'* signature tune.

Yours sincerely,
NORMAN MCCANDLISH,
Knockintober,
Ballinluigi, Perthshire,
February 20.

Tanker disaster

From Mr Arthur Ellison

Sir, The *Sea Empress* incident (reports, February 22) highlights again the damage these ships cause to our own and other countries' coastlines and the seas around them. The Dutch firm that won the contract to salvage this ship is world famous in this type of work. However, they obviously did not have one of their own powerful tugs immediately available to tackle the job. The *Sea Empress* did reflect the tug power on site was inadequate in the prevailing weather conditions and the ship regrounded. A large powerful Chinese tug assisted for a short time.

It has now emerged that the pump room in the *Sea Empress* became flooded, making discharge of the cargo to another tanker a very difficult and lengthy process. The possibility of explosion, highlighted by the media, was most likely to have come from the oil gases in the flooded pump room.

To minimise future disasters of this nature, surely the British Government and Lloyd's could jointly support their own salvage tug and equipment, perhaps based at Falmouth?

Tighter inspection of channel depths and illuminated channel buoys in the approaches to oil-discharge ports and of tanker arrival draughts appears to be necessary. These measures would be inexpensive and simple to establish and would perhaps reduce the likelihood of similar accidents in the future.

Yours faithfully,
A. ELLISON,
1 Southcroft Drive,
Chapmanslade, Westbury, Wiltshire,
February 22.

Accordian band

From Ms Gwenneth Bransby-Zachary

Sir, Barry Millington tells us in his review (February 20) of the performance of Prokofiev's *Cantata* for the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution (BBC Symphony Orchestra under Mark Elder) that the accordian band went uncredited. Please allow me to provide the missing information: Owen Murray, Wilhelmina Drayton, David Farmer, Murray Grainger, Phuyong Nguyen, Neil Varley and Ian Watson.

What is remarkable is that six of these accordianists were trained in London. Owen Murray (whose agent I am) is Professor of Accordian Studies at the Royal Academy of Music and his six colleagues in the band were either past or current students.

The performance was a credit to Owen Murray's pioneering work on behalf of this fascinating but under-appreciated instrument, and also to the Royal Academy of Music, the only music college in the UK sufficiently enlightened to offer accordian studies within its syllabus.

Yours faithfully,
GWENNETH BRANSBY-ZACHARY,
Director, GBZ Management,
The Italian Building, Dockhead, SE1.

Labour's policy on school standards

From the General Secretary of the Secondary Heads Association

Sir, I was surprised and disappointed that David Blunkett (letter, February 15) should challenge the commitment of the Secondary Heads Association to raising educational standards, and suggest that we stopped short of supporting practical measures. It was precisely because we found so few practical measures in it that we criticised his party's document, *Excellence for Everyone* (report, February 13).

We warmly welcome and fully share Labour's commitment to raising standards and we have plenty of practical proposals, based on experience and knowledge of schools, to offer to Labour, if they would care to ask. So far, they have not done so.

Mr Blunkett's letter deals with three practical matters. The first is a national qualification for heads. We support this and, if the qualification is based on sound training and proven practice, no governing body will wish to appoint a head who has not obtained it. A national register would be a bureaucratic irrelevance.

We are delighted to accept Mr Blunkett's assurance that schools will run themselves and that powers will not be restored to local education authorities; that is precisely what we were looking for in the document and failed to find.

Thirdly, we fully support the principle of homework and it is helpful to have national support for it. We are enthusiastic about study centres for pupils who have poor home facilities for doing homework. We just do not believe that it is the business of ministers to prescribe the quantity of work for every child in the land.

It is said that Mr Blunkett should react to criticism by insulting our professional commitment. He should really try to understand the message we are sending him: we support his aims. We just want to know how they are going to be achieved and we are ready and willing to discuss these matters with him.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SUTTON,
General Secretary,
Secondary Heads Association,
130 Regents Road, Leicester,
February 16.

Causes of the left

From Mr Stuart Weir

Sir, I object to Daniel Johnson's complacent canard (article, February 21) that the *New Statesman* has been the home of lost causes since Anthony Howard ceased to be editor. I should, for example, think that Duncan Campbell's brilliant series of "secret society" articles in 1987, culminating in the exposure of the spy satellite Zircon, counted as a substantial winning streak.

In my own time as editor, the *New Statesman* took up the causes of democratic renewal, constitutional reform and citizen's rights, and in 1988 I founded Charter 88 from its offices to campaign vigorously for these causes. We can fairly claim to have seized a major chunk of the intellectual high

Many thanks

From Mrs Rebekah Budenberg

Sir, Perhaps the solution to extracting thank-you letters from children (letters, February 16, 20) is to make it clear that no letter of thanks means no present next time. This should also apply to adults receiving presents from children.

Yours faithfully,
REBEKAH BUDENBERG,
50 Main Street,
Medbourne,
Leicestershire,
February 20.

From Mr David J. Powell

Sir, With a little more hardware added to his computer, Mrs Jean Stephenson's grandson (letter, February 20) could have sent his thank-you letters by e-mail or fax, so avoiding the equal-

ly old tradition of an invigorating walk to the post-box.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. POWELL,
Tree Tops, Brooms Green,
Dymock, Gloucestershire.

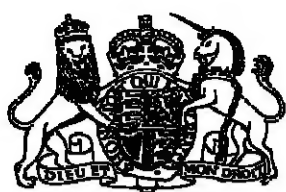
From Mrs Jennifer Donkin

Sir, In our heritage-conscious times is saying thank-you now to be regarded (Mrs Stephenson's letter) as "an old tradition"?

Yours faithfully,
JENNIFER DONKIN,
13 Roman Hill,
Barton, Cambridge.

Business letters, page 25

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

February 22: The Queen this afternoon visited the United Nations Almshouses, Rochester Row, London SW1, and was received by the Foundation Chairman (the Lady Trend) and the Lord Mayor of Westminster (Councillor Alan Bradley).

Her Majesty toured the Almshouses, escorted by Sir Reginald Pullen (Warden and Clerk to the Trustees) and Miss Alison McWilliam (Matron, Kent House), and met residents and staff.

ST JAMES'S PALACE

February 22: The Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, this morning received Mr John James (Secretary and Keeper of the Records).

His Royal Highness, Patron, Abbeyfield, afterwards received representatives.

The Prince of Wales later attended a Luncheon with Her Majesty's Judges at the Central

Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London EC4.

His Royal Highness, Chairman, the Royal Collection Trust, this afternoon attended a trustees' meeting at St James's Palace.

The Prince of Wales, Patron, Intermediate Technology, this evening held a Reception at St James's Palace.

His Royal Highness, President, WaterAid, later held a Dinner for supporters at St James's Palace.

KENSINGTON PALACE

February 22: The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, the London Choral Society, accompanied by The Duchess of Gloucester, this evening attended a Concert at St John's Smith Square, London SW1.

The Duke of Kent has been pleased to appoint Mr Andrew Palmer to be an Extra Equerry to His Royal Highness.

Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales, on behalf of The Queen, will hold an investiture at Buckingham Palace at 11am.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of Victim Support Scotland, will attend the National Victims' Conference at Glasgow Road, at 10.30am; as Honorary President of the Scottish Motor Neurone Disease Association, will visit the Firth of Forth, at 1.40pm; and, as Patron of the National Autistic Society, will attend the South West Appeal thank you event at Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire, at 7.30pm.

The Duke of Kent, as President of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, will attend a discussion given by Mr Tony Sale, at Albemarle Street, London W1, at 7.15pm.

Today's events

The Queen's Life Guard mounts at Horse Guards at 11am. The Queen's Guard mounts at Buckingham Palace at 11.30am.

Birthdays today

Mr Bill Alexander, theatre director, 48; the Duke of Beaufort, 68; Miss Pam Blundell, fashion designer, 29; Mr Jeremy P. Brooks, chairman, Price Waterhouse Europe, 57.

Mr James Cousins, MP, 52; Lady Digby, 62; Lord Edd, 77; Miss Margaret Furrer, former chairman, Central Midlands Board, 62; Mr Frank Gensberg, Principal, George Watson's College, Edinburgh, 63; Mrs Maureen Hicks, former MP, 48.

Mr Nicholas Kenyon, Controller, BBC Radio 3, 45; Mr John Lewis, Head Master, Eton College, 54; the Earl of Lincoln, 53; Mr Anton Moosmann, chef, 49; Lord St Levan, 77.

Mr Colin Sanders, founder, Solid State Logic, 54; Mr Martinide Sidwell, pianist and conductor, 80; Miss Helena Sukova, tennis player, 31; Lord Tugendhat, 59; Mr David Ward, former president, Law Society, 59; Mrs Alfred Watson, former Headmaster, Drayton School, 78.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Samuel Pepps, diarist, London, 1633; John Blow, composer, Newark, baptised this day, 1649; George Frederick Handel, composer, Halle, Germany, 1685; Mayer Arnscheldt Rothschild, banker, Frankfurt, 1734; John Walter II, chief proprietor of *The Times* 1812-47, London, 1776; George Watts, painter, London, 1817; Norman Lindsay, artist and novelist, Creswick, Victoria, 1879; Karl Jaspers, Existentialist philosopher, Oldenburg, Germany, 1883; Victor Fleming, film director, Pasadena, California, 1883; Erich Kästner, writer, Dresden, 1899.

DEATHS: Sir Joshua Reynolds, first president of the Royal Academy 1768-92, London, 1792; John Keats, poet, Rome, 1821; John Quincy Adams, sixth American President 1825-29, Boston, Massachusetts, 1848; Carl Friedrich Gauss, mathematician, Göttingen, 1855; William Butterfield, architect of the Gothic revival, London, 1900; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, twenty-eighth American President 1913-21, Washington, 1924; Dame Nellie Melba, soprano, Sydney, New South Wales, 1931; Sir Edward Elgar, Master of the King's Music 1924-34, Worcester, 1934; Leo Hendrick Baekeland, inventor of Bakelite, Beacon, New York, 1944; Paul Claudel, poet and dramatist, Paris, 1955; Stan Laurel (né Arthur Stanley Jefferson), comedian, Santa Monica, California, 1965; L. S. Lowry, painter, Glossop, Derbyshire, 1976; Sir Adrian Boult, conductor, Farnham, Surrey, 1983.

The Cat Street conspiracy was uncovered, 1820. Major Walter Winfield patented an outdoor game he called "sphaeristike", later known as lawn tennis, 1874. The Rotary Club was founded in Chicago, 1905. The February revolution began in Russia, 1917. The Fascist Party was founded in Italy by Benito Mussolini, 1919.

Dinners

Needlemakers' Company

The Lord Mayor and Lady May, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, received the guests at the annual dinner of the Needlemakers' Company held last night at the Mansion House, M.

The Lord Mayor, Sir Anthony Wilson and Lord Howe of Aberavon, QC, also spoke.

HM Government

Mr Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was the host at a dinner given by Her Majesty's Government yesterday at Lancaster House to bid farewell to the Korean Ambassador.

Britain-Australia Society

The Australian High Commissioner and the Agents-General were present at the annual dinner of the Britain-Australia Society held last night at the Dorchester hotel to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the society and Australia Day (January 26). Sir John Leahy, chairman, presided.

Sir Colin Cowdrey and Mr Sallyanne Atkinson, Senior Trade Commissioner for Australia in Paris, also spoke.

Securities Institute

Mr Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP, was the principal guest and speaker at a dinner of the Securities Institute held last night at the Carlton Club. Mr Graham Ross Russell, chairman, presided. Among those present were:

National Sporting Club

Mr Stephen Harner, a Director of the National Sporting Club, presided at a dinner held last night at the Café Royal in aid of the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. Mr Gareth Edwards was the guest of honour.

Memorial services

Sir James Darling: A memorial service for Sir James Darling, Head Master of Geelong Grammar School (1930-61), will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, Kensington, on Wednesday, March 6, at noon.

Mrs Angela Farnell: A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mrs Angela Farnell, Founder of the Elderly Accommodation Council, was held yesterday at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory, Warwick Street, Soho. Father Francis Davis officiated.

Mr John St John Cooper read the lesson and Mr James Draper, trustee of the council, delivered the eulogy.

Lady Fitz: A mass for Lady Fitz was celebrated on Wednesday in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, Palace of Westminster. Father Michael Seed was the principal celebrant. Mr Vincent Hanna, son-in-law, led the bidding prayers. The Hon Mrs Milner, daughter, read the lesson.

Land Fit: husband, other members of the family and members of both Houses of Parliament were among those present.

Appointment

The Lord Chancellor has appointed Mr Ian Forbes Pritchard-Witts (barrister) to be a full-time chairman of industrial tribunals (England and Wales) with effect from February 26.

Mr Pritchard-Witts, who was appointed a part-time chairman of industrial tribunals in February 1994, will be assigned to the London North region.



Chen Chen, who has an amazing repertoire for her age, and confidence to match

Girl, 9, chosen for festival

A PIANO-PLAYING child prodigy who has been compared to Nigel Kennedy and Vanessa Mae has been chosen to play at a prestigious festival ahead of adults twice her age.

Chen Chen, nine, will play at the British Federation of Festivals' seventy-fifth anniversary celebration at the University of Warwick in July. The event has helped to launch the careers of classical music "stars" including James Galway and Nigel Kennedy.

Christopher Willshire, the festival's organiser, said that Chen Chen, who practises for two hours every day, has enormous potential. He said: "She's only nine years old but playing an amazing repertoire. Simply, her potential is enormous. We were very excited at having such a talent at the festival and I am sure she will go a long way."

She was selected to play at the national festival after being named the best musician at the Brownhills Festival in the West Midlands, last October. Janice Robinson, secretary of the festival, said that the judges had no choice but to nominate Chen Chen.

"She has such talent, and is very confident when she is under pressure. She does not buckle and when you listen to her you realise that she has great promise. She beats off people more than twice her age to get this opportunity, and competitors who have much more experience than her. When I listen to her I can hear a new Nigel Kennedy."

Chen Chen, who came to Britain three years ago with her father, Keng Chen, a student, will be performing alongside more than 300 acts from dance, drama and music.

Her teacher at Birmingham Conservatoire, where Chen Chen has earned a scholarship, is similarly astounded at her pupil's talent. Beryl Chempkin said: "It is a fiercely competitive world but if she continues she could go to the top."

"She has the natural talent and responds very well to being taught. It is a joy to work with her and she is a very nice girl, not precocious at all. She plays just as well as people twice her age and often beats them in competitions. If she keeps it up there could be great things ahead for her."

Receptions

HM Government

Mr Malcolm Rifkind, QC, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was the host yesterday at a reception given by Her Majesty's Government at Lancaster House in honour of the Western European Union Assembly.

The London Institute

The Chairman of the London Institute, Mr Julian E. Markham, and the Institute's Rector, Professor John McKenzie, were hosts at the reception held on Tuesday, February 20, and Wednesday, February 21, in the Institute's Gallery.

at 65 Davies Street, W1, to launch the annual report and to mark the opening of "The Leading Edge", an exhibition of current research by individuals and project teams from the Institute's five Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London College of Fashion, and London College of Printing and Distributive Trades.

The guests included the Counsellor for Cultural Affairs and Press, Mr René Schmitt, Swiss Embassy, Sir Brian Gossnell, MP, Hugh Dykes, MP, Sir Anthony and Lady Garner and Sir William Stubbs.

University news

St Peter's College, Oxford: Honorary Fellowship: Lord Hanson; Emeritus Fellowship: Charles Denis Sanderson; Democracy 2000: Research Fellowship in Ageing Studies: David E. Sumon.

Hughes Hall, Cambridge: Elected to a fellowship in Class A: Nicholas Sinclair Brown, Anthony Keene Rodgers.

University of Durham: Keith Lindsey has been appointed Professor of Plant Molecular Biology. Internal promotions to chair: Martin Bryan Montgomery, Master of Archaeology; Ian Shennan, Department of Geography.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr D.A.E. Costello

The engagement is announced between Declan, eldest son of Dr John Costello and Dr Christine Costello, of Wimbledon, and Marion, daughter of Mr and Mrs Roger Palmer, of Newmarket.

Mr S.T. Crozier and Miss S.J. Knecht: The engagement is announced between Stephen, son of Mr and Mrs J.E. Crozier, of Hill, Avon, and Sarah Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs B. Knecht, of Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles, California.

Mr B.J. Erith and Miss M. Poole: The engagement is announced between Benjamin, second son of Mr and Mrs William Erith, of Lizards Leap, Warwick, Bermuda, and Michael, only daughter of Mr and Mrs George Poole, of Langshot, Hovey, Surrey.

Mr D.T. Harding and Miss N.A.C. Davenport: The engagement is announced between David, eldest son of Captain and Mrs Roy Harding, of Helensburgh, and Nicholas, daughter of Mr and Mrs George I. Davenport, of Welwyn Garden City.

Mr C.D. James and Miss S.M. MacDonald: The engagement is announced between Christopher James, of Torosay Castle, Isle of Mull, and Sarah MacDonald, of Oban and Edinburgh.

Mr R.J. Jennings and Miss E.J. Chopping: The engagement is announced between Richard John, eldest son of Mr and Mrs P.J. Jennings, of Gawsorth, Cheshire, and Emma-Jane, only daughter of Mr and Mrs R.J. Chopping, of Camberley, Surrey.

Mr D.B. Shapiro and Miss L.H. Stanton: The engagement is announced between David, son of Dr and Mrs Carl Shapiro, of Manchester, and Lisa, daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Stanton, of Harrow, Middlesex.

Lieutenant G.D. Jones, RN, and Miss R. Birnie Reid: The engagement is announced between Gareth, younger son of Mr A.J. Jones and the late Mrs C.M. Jones, of Swansea, and Rosanna, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs R.C. Birnie Reid, of Culis, Aberdeen.

Mr O.N. Preston

The engagement is announced between Oliver, son of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Preston, of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, and Cressida, youngest daughter of The Earl and Countess of Dudley, of Kensington, London.

Mr G.N. Lawson-Tancred and Miss E.K. Manger: The engagement is announced between Rod, grandson of Sir Henry Lawson-Tancred, Bt, and the late Jean, Lady Lawson-Tancred, of Aldborough, North Yorkshire, and Emma, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs John Manger, of Crowborough, East Sussex.

Mr A.R.G. Lunt and Miss C.L. Gierth: The engagement is announced between Andrew, younger son of Mr and Mrs Robin Lunt, of Bramshott, Hampshire, and Christine, younger daughter of Mrs Valerie Gierth and the late Mr Ronald Gierth, of Shepperton, Middlesex.

Mr R.D. Taylor and Miss E.M.L. Beauchamp: The engagement is announced between Rod, grandson of Mr and Mrs John Duncan and nephew of Mr and Mrs Rodney Allen, of Cape Town, South Africa, and Emma, daughter of Mr and Mrs Derek Beauchamp, of Dorchester, Dorset.

Mr R.H. Jackson and Miss A.M. Hebel: The engagement is announced between James, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Jackson, of Donhead St Mary, Wiltshire, and Alexandra, elder daughter of Mr Simon Hebel, of Hexham, Northumberland, and Mrs Simon Peace, and stepdaughter of Mr Simon Peace, of Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria.

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School news

Edgell College, Bideford: The Governors are pleased to announce the following scholarships and exhibitions for September 1996:

Junior scholarships: Kayleigh Holland; Sports scholarship: Kristina Kaselan; Senior scholarships: Christopher Burgery, Paul Johnson, Christopher Paul.

Music exhibition: Jesse Lawrence; 13+ scholarships: Frances Martin, Elizabeth Sherry; 13+ exhibition: Jonathan Gill-Lie.

Wycombe Abbey School: Scholarship awards 1996. The Wycombe Abbey open scholarship for 1996, awarded to Norman Court School.

The William Johnston Yapp scholarship: Lucinda Maloney, High March School.

Lecture

Company of World Traders: The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Sheriffs, introduced the Company of World Traders' annual Tactus lecture, sponsored by the London School of Foreign Trade, which was delivered by Mr Yusuf Shirawi, last night at Guildhall.

Mr Bryan Montgomery, Master of the Company, and the Senior and Junior Wardens were present.

Reunion

The "Ox and Cow": The Oxford and County Business (Commercial) Colleges will be holding a Diamond Jubilee Reunion, in Oxford, on Saturday, October 19, 1996. We should be delighted to hear from ex-students and teachers who would like to attend and/or who would like to join our alumni network. Please contact Rosemary Waterhouse on 01865 310100.

BMD'S: 0171 782 7272
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

DEATHS

ARMSTRONG - Dr. Terence E., on February 21st, suddenly, at home, at 10, Martindale, Sidwell, Wiltshire, aged 68. He was a devoted husband and father. Buried at St. Mary's Church, Wiltshire. Family and friends are invited to a service at 11.00 am on Wednesday, February 22nd, at St. Mary's Church, Wiltshire. Condolences accepted. Mrs. E. Armstrong, 10, Martindale, Sidwell, Wiltshire. Tel: 01299 400000.

BIRTHS

BERRY - On 17th February 1996 at Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, a daughter, Charlotte (née Kinloch) and Michael (née Kinloch), to Mr and Mrs James Kinloch.

BROOKS - On February 19th, to Suzie (née Kinloch) and Nicholas, a daughter, Holly Jane. Tel: 01299 400000.

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ARMSTRONG - Dr. Terence E., on February 21st, suddenly, at home, at 10, Martindale, Sidwell, Wiltshire, aged 68. He was a devoted husband and father. Buried at St. Mary's Church, Wiltshire. Family and friends are invited to a service at 11.00 am on Wednesday, February 22nd, at St. Mary's Church, Wiltshire. Condolences accepted. Mrs. E. Armstrong, 10, Martindale, Sidwell, Wiltshire. Tel: 01299 400000.

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OBITUARIES

LORD MARSHALL OF GORING

Lord Marshall of Goring, CBE, FRS, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority and the Central Electricity Generating Board, died of cancer on February 20 aged 63. He was born on March 5, 1932.

For more than two decades, Walter Marshall was the most eloquent spokesman and principal cheerleader of nuclear power in Britain. A nuclear physicist, he was a member of the House of Lords. He was a member of the House of Commons. He was a member of the House of Commons. He was a member of the House of Commons.

He was born in Rumney, Cardiff, the son of a baker, and early showed signs of high intelligence and an appetite for work. On his first day at school he disdained the sandpit and insisted to his teacher that he wanted to do sums.

At seven he identified an error in a maths test book, and at 17 he was the youngest ever undergraduate at Birmingham University. He graduated with a first in mathematical physics at 20 and took his PhD at 22.

His emergence as a fully-fledged scientist coincided with the innocent optimism of the 1950s, when nuclear power was seen as an endless and inexpensive source of electricity, so it was almost inevitable that he should be drawn to work at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. He spent a year at the University of California, and another at Harvard, before becoming head of the theoretical physics division at Harwell in 1960, deputy director in 1966, and director in 1968.

He was elected FRS in 1971 and appointed CBE in 1973.

Walter Marshall combined intellectual brilliance with a forthright manner and a bulky presence which some found unwelcome. Once satisfied of the technical merits of a case, he was impatient with doubters and prone to nail his colours to the mast, leaving him little room for retreat. His accent had a strange Germanic quality which added to the mystique. His energy was formidable.

Marshall's reign at Harwell was successful and he began the process of directing the laboratory away from nuclear physics and into broader areas of research, which continues today. In 1974 he made a fateful step, becoming chief scientist at the Department of Energy, in uneasy harness with the Energy Secretary, Tony Benn.

By this time Benn had emerged from the chrysalis of his early career as a



technocrat and metamorphosed into a born-again leftwinger with decided views on nuclear power. The relationship with Marshall was bound to be explosive, and so it proved. To Marshall's plans that there was no lobby for nuclear power in Britain, Benn once replied: "Yes there is, Walter, and you look at it every morning when you're shaving."

While Marshall did his best to promote the building of pressurised water reactors in Britain, Benn did all he could to undermine the whole concept of the peaceful atom. A parting of the ways was inevitable, and it came when Marshall was sacked from his post in 1977. "It was awful," he later said.

Public rehabilitation came with the election in 1979 of Margaret Thatcher, the only politician ever really on Marshall's wavelength. Mrs Thatcher adored getting her head around complex technical issues like global warming, arms control, or nuclear power, perhaps suspecting this took her into areas where her Cabinet colleagues seldom dared to tread. Marshall proved the perfect foil.

In 1981 he became chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority, staying only a year in the post before inheriting the chairmanship of the Central Electricity Generating Board, a far riskier prospect for one with his combination of qualities. He was knighted in 1982 and earned the undying gratitude of Mrs

Thatcher for keeping the lights on during the miners' strike of 1984 and thereby making a major contribution to the outcome.

At the beginning Marshall had to make a tough decision. Would the strike be a long one, justifying the immediate burning of expensive oil in power stations his predecessors had ordered years before? He believed so and did it, promising to resign if he was wrong, and the action cost the CEBG dear. He was right, and emerged as a life peer in 1985 on Mrs Thatcher's recommendation. But he could never have done it if the CEBG had not over-ordered plant in the 1970s, building up a huge generating surplus which Marshall deployed so brilliantly to see off Arthur Scargill.

This was Marshall's finest hour, but disappointment lay ahead. The Chernobyl disaster of 1986 shook confidence in nuclear power, through Marshall was quick to identify and publicise the technical flaws of the Soviet reactor responsible, and contrast it with Western designs. In spite of his efforts, however, the nuclear dream was now turning sour.

In 1989 there was a further setback. Once again he had staked his job, this time promising to go if the CEBG was not preserved intact after privatisation. Cecil Parkinson, then Energy Secretary, rightly decided that competition could be achieved only if the company was split. Then, at the very last moment, nuclear power was pulled from the privatisation when its true costs were finally disclosed.

Marshall stalked away from Whitehall once more, never to return. He founded the World Association of Nuclear Operators and was appointed its first chairman, advised insurance syndicates and represented foreign power companies, but these were jobs below his true merit. Having staked his career on the outset on the promise of nuclear power, he suffered eclipse just as surely as it did.

Lord Marshall won many awards and medals, including the Kelvin Medal, the Maxwell Medal for Theoretical Physics, and — inappropriately, some may feel — the Henry DeWolf Smyth Nuclear Statesman Award. He was never a statesman, but never a trimmer, either. He said what he believed, loudly and clearly, and was happy to be judged by it. It distressed him that arguments he found so powerful left so many others unmoved. Lord Marshall lived in Goring-on-Thames, where he cultivated a garden, practised origami, played croquet and kept up an interest in physics. He is survived by his wife Ann and a son and daughter.

MORTON GOULD

Morton Gould, American composer, conductor and pianist, died in Orlando, Florida, on February 21 aged 82. He was born on December 10, 1913.



Morton Gould was a classical composer in a particularly American mould, who built bridges between the concert hall and popular music, and who wrote several works which have become standards of light music.

Like George Gershwin and Aaron Copland, Gould employed familiar jazz and folk idioms in his compositions, putting them to more formal, classical use. And, like Erroll Garner, he was able to improvise delightfully at the piano from a theme submitted by the audience. This latter ability split over into his concert works, making him particularly susceptible to jazz influences, and giving his work a great rhythmic freedom.

He was also an extremely versatile composer. From his first composition at the age of six to the winning of the Pulitzer Prize for Music last year, Gould worked on almost every aspect of musical entertainment: radio and television, films, ballet and theatre work, as well as on the concert stage. Much of his work had a strongly patriotic flavour, which might explain why he was not better known outside America.

The son of an Austrian father who worked as an estate agent, and a Russian mother, Gould was brought up in New York. He began improvising on the piano at the age of four, and thus became known as an infant prodigy — a rather tiresome label to be reminded of when he was older and trying to establish himself as a serious composer.

He published his first composition, a waltz entitled *Just Six*, two years later. At eight he was awarded a full scholarship to the New York Institute of Musical Art, later to become the Juilliard School of Music, under the patronage of its director, Walter Damrosch.

Gould went on to study piano under Abby Whiteside at the New York University

School of Music, from which he graduated at the age of 15 — although still in high school for his regular education. But in 1930 he was forced to drop out of school when the Depression ruined his father. He then began to look to music as a full-time professional career.

He launched himself on a lecture-demonstration tour of East Coast universities. But, although this was well received, he soon turned to the more lucrative fields of the theatre and radio, evolving special musical forms that could fit into tight schedules. He called these "symphonies" and "concertettes". From these came the melodic *Pavane*, the second movement of the *Second American Symphonette* (1935), which for many years was a staple of the light orchestra repertoire.

There was also *Interplay* — originally known as *American Concertette* for piano and orchestra and composed for José Iturbi — which Jerome Robbins used as the score for his ballet *Interplay*. Late in 1942 Gould's *Spirituals for Orchestra* was performed.

The following year, Gould's first full symphony had its premiere. His second, performed by the New York Philharmonic, was panned by the critics for its eclecticism:

but Gould persisted and turned out a stream of concert works over the next six years. By 1949 he was ranked, along with George Gershwin and Aaron Copland, as one of the three most popular American composers.

He had his own touring orchestra, his own recording studio and his own music publishing concern. Pieces like *American Salute* and *Cowboy Rhapsody* were being played, it seemed, by almost every high school band and orchestra in the country.

Commissions flowed in over the next three decades. There were two Broadway shows: *Billion Dollar Baby* in 1945 and *Arms and the Girl* in 1950, and a stream of concert performances which he often conducted himself, including a 1966 appearance with the BBC Festival Orchestra in London. Gould had struck a nerve in the American musical psyche.

He said of his own work: "Whatever newness there may be in my music is not so much a radical departure as an integration and crystallisation of influences in our native musical scene." He continued to work until the end of his life.

Morton Gould is survived by two sons and two daughters.

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HUGH HODGKINSON

Lieutenant-Commander Hugh Hodgkinson, DSC and Bar, schoolmaster and destroyer captain, died on January 22 aged 84. He was born on January 13, 1912.

"HUGHIE" Hodgkinson's approach to the education of young people, both within and without the naval service, could hardly be described as child-centred or to have any affinity with today's fashionable doctrines. His singular achievement was to lift Milton Biey school, near Blandford Dorset, from a low point of obscurity to one of the country's most successful, private schools, with a recognisable ethos of its own, more than 250

pupils and a waiting list. His belief, for example, that "the officers must be tougher than the men" was indubitably fashioned by his own naval upbringing. Before being invalided out in 1948 with persistent sinus problems, he was given, as his final post in the Navy, one that was habitually given only to the best — teaching the 13-year-old new entry cadets at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

One of his trainees remembers him as an admirable exemplar. "To us schoolboys he was very glamorous, with his war record, his medals and his good looks. But he taught us the iron imperatives of our duty towards others and to the Service, with wisdom and friendliness."

After leaving the Navy, he took a history degree as a mature student at St Catherine's College, Oxford. The next few years were spent teaching in two different schools in South Africa, a period in which he also had a useful year at Gordonstown.

Returning to Dorset in 1955 and applying for the job of a housemaster at Milton Abbey, he was told: "It's not a housemaster we need but a headmaster." Thus began 14 years of hard labour. The new headmaster introduced the custom of the early morning run, the uniform of lovat green shirt and shorts, an accent on "practical work" with the hands, regular chapel services and other measures now widely seen as archaic.

But behind these eye-catching, and often controversial initiatives flourished a quiet culture which encouraged self-esteem and extracted achievement beyond expectation, both inside and outside the classroom.

Robert Hugh Hodgkinson joined the Navy in 1925. A career in destroyers and minesweepers was enhanced by a tour in South Africa as ADC to the Governor-General; in South Africa he met his wife, Wendy, whom he married in 1938. At the beginning of the war he was second-in-command of the destroyer *Harvest* and then, throughout 1941, of the crack destroyer *Hotspur*, which was based at Alexandria.

Hodgkinson's book, *Before*

the Tide Turned (1944), describes how *Hotspur* took part in the Battle of Cape Matapan. It also tells of her participation in the rescue of most of the British and Commonwealth troops from Greece and Crete, an operation which was conducted throughout under relentless air attack.

Yet, although the Mediterranean Fleet suffered terrible losses, the gratitude of the army it succoured — and the knowledge that the soldiers had been rescued to fight another day — was its reward. Admiral Cunningham's stirring call to his officers and men that "we must not let them [the Army] down" had not gone unheeded.

In the dawn of May 29, 1941, while in the process of withdrawing from Crete, laden with rescued troops, *Hotspur* was ordered to turn back towards the coast and find the destroyer *Imperial*, which was crippled with defective steering gear. She was to take off the troops *Imperial* had evacuated and then sink her. This *Hotspur* accomplished and just managed to escape in broad daylight with, by that time, more than 900 soldiers crammed on board. Other ships of the evacuation force were not so lucky; the destroyer *Hereward* perished under air attack, and there were heavy casualties among the soldiers when the cruisers *Orion* and *Dido* were severely damaged.

Hotspur later suffered damage herself in an unpleasant surprise engagement with two large and powerful Vichy French destroyers, which intercepted her and another British destroyer off the Lebanese coast between Tyre and Sidon. With their combined armament of ten 5.5-inch guns — almost a light cruiser armament — the *Guepard* and *Valmy* totally outgunned the British destroyers. Indeed, the



latter were lucky to escape, since the French ships were not only better armed but could also steam at 40 knots — several knots faster than any British destroyer. Having extricated herself from this peril, *Hotspur* subsequently took part in a dozen hazardous

supply runs into besieged Tobruk until that crucial stronghold was relieved by the Eighth Army in December 1941. She also participated in the sinking of a U-boat.

Hodgkinson was repatriated with jaundice, and it was not until late 1943 that he was able to persuade the powers that be to give him a command, the Hunt class destroyer *Pychley*. In *Pychley*, he earned his first DSC as a consequence of a brilliant action in the North Sea off Cromer, successfully protecting a convoy, at the cost of one armed trawler, against an attack by four flotillas of German E-boats numbering 32 craft. The convoy had, luckily, received advance warning of the approach of the enemy by RAF bombers which had spotted the E-boats while returning from a raid over Germany.

Hodgkinson's second DSC was awarded for his courage and determination as escort group commander off Gold Beach during the Normandy invasion. He ended the war in Tokyo Bay in command of the destroyer *Wizard*.

His later enthusiasms resulted in a book about the flora and fauna of the Pyrenees, and an ornate silver bowl which is competed for annually with great rivalry by the sailing teams of Dartmouth, Cranwell and Sandhurst.

An inspirational teacher and a bright light in the ambiguous world of today's education, Hughie Hodgkinson is survived by his wife Wendy and by their two sons and a daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

Advertisements in the Personal Column section, including: TICKETS FOR SALE, FLATSHARE, WANTED, FLIGHTS DIRECTORY, CAPITAL FLIGHTS, OVERSEAS TRAVEL, UK HOLIDAYS, WINTER SPORTS, TRAILFINDERS, and SPECIALISTS.

THE NEW GREEK ISLAND

(From our Athens correspondent)

A new island began to rise above the level of the sea in the Bay of Thera (Santorini) on the 4th inst, and in five days it attained the height of from 130ft to 150ft, with a length of upwards of 350ft and a breadth of 100ft. It continues to increase, and consists of a rusty black metallic lava, very heavy, and resembling half-melted scoria that has boiled up from a furnace.

The present eruption commenced on January 31. A noise like volleys of artillery was heard, but without any earthquake. On the following day flames issued from the sea, in a part of the bay called Bulkanos, where the water is always discoloured and impregnated with sulphur from abundant springs at the bottom. The flames rose at intervals to the height of 15ft, and were seen at times to issue from the southwestern part of Nea Kaimene. That island was soon rent by a deep fissure and the southern part sank considerably. On

ON THIS DAY

February 23, 1866

The Santorini region has since become a popular resort, because the volcano is inactive and there is the chance to peer into the defunct craters.

February 4 the eruptions became more violent. Gas forced itself up from the depths with terrific noise, resembling the bursting of a steam boiler; flames arose at intervals, and white smoke formed an immense column, crowned with a curled capital of dark heavy clouds. The new island was visible next morning, increasing sensibly to the eye as it rose out of the sea at no great distance.

ITALY: Florence, February 18 Just 40 in number are the Deputies who,

according to the latest published list, have inscribed their names to speak in the present debate — 40 thieves of the precious time of Italy.

Five of these orators have said their say in the first two days of the desultory discussion. If the remaining 35 proceed at the same rate, a vote will be come to on March 5. Fortunately, there is a chance that, when half a dozen more Deputies shall have spoken, the chamber will get weary, and will insist on an early close of the debate.

The pretext for all this debate is the Bill for granting two months' supplies — a grant that must be made if the administration of the country is to go on. It would be erroneous to imagine that the debate is on this topic, than which nothing seems further from the thoughts of the Chamber. Every honourable Deputy who has something to say, no matter on what topic, foists it into this discussion. One develops a financial plan, another makes a long speech on the reductions in the army, another takes for his theme the documents in the French Yellow-book...

